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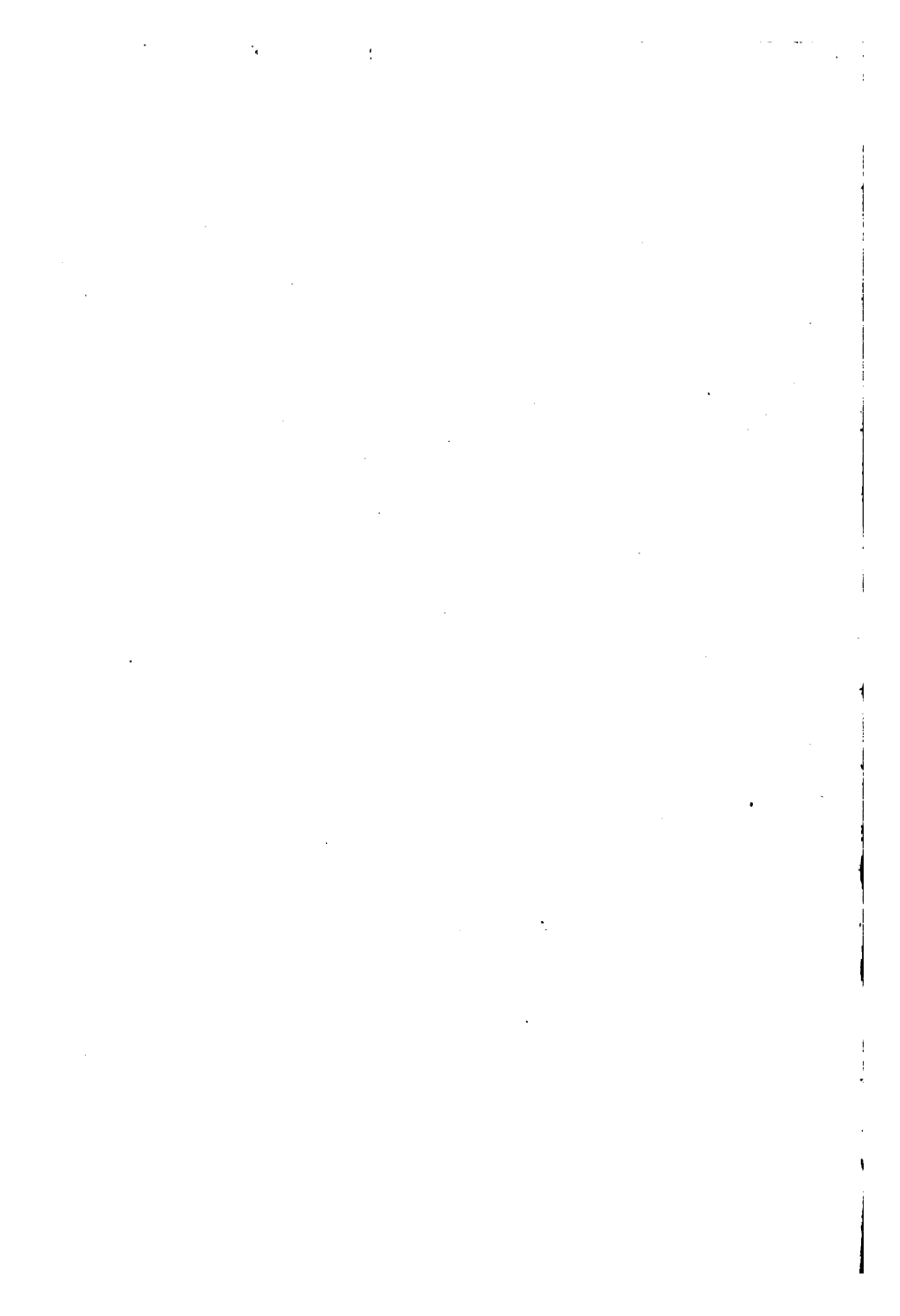
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THE BOY GLOBE TROTTERS

By **ELBERT FISHER**

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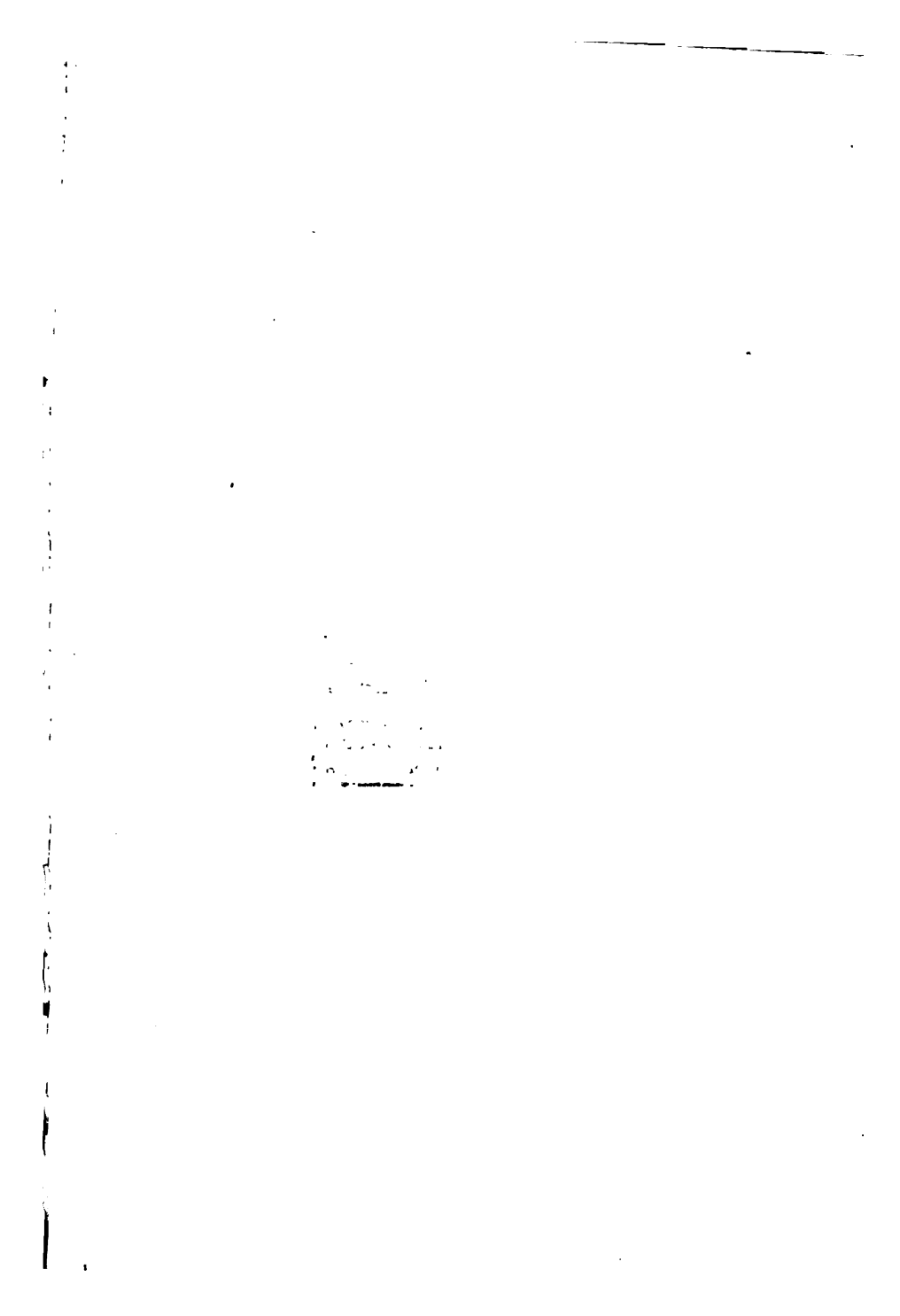
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"How do you do," said Winfield gravely.

[Page 54].

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THE BOY GLOBE TROTTERS SERIES

FROM INDIA TO THE WAR ZONE

BY
ELBERT FISHER

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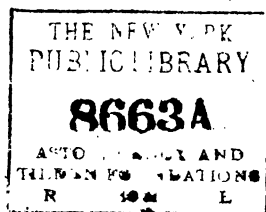


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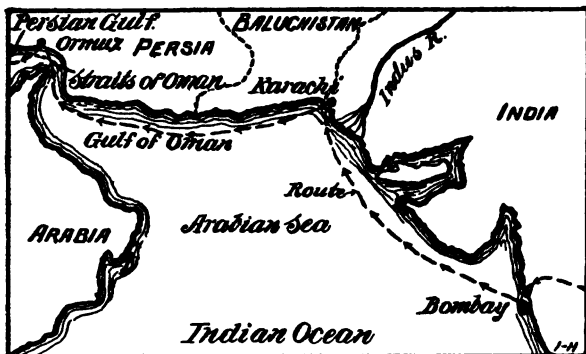
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FROM INDIA TO THE WAR ZONE

CHAPTER I

UNDER ARREST IN BOMBAY

"THE Chief of Police has sent for both of you, and I have promised that we will be at his office at eleven o'clock this morning."

The speaker was Professor Goodrich, and the ones addressed were Winfield Merritt and Stanwood Bailey, two New York boys who were making a tour of the world, and had reached Bombay, India.

"Have they caught the thief?" asked Winfield.

"No; but I understand they have found some trace of him. The man who notified me was an

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under officer of the Chief, and did not know much about the case," replied the Professor.

The boys while making their way through India, from Madras, had become acquainted with Professor Goodrich, a naturalist. Much of the route was traversed in his company, during which time they had interesting experiences, and had assisted the Professor in capturing many specimens of butterflies and other insects.

Prior to reaching India they had made excursions into and through Siam and Burma, and before reaching those places had become acquainted with a Mr. Winthrop, a wealthy American, who employed them to take care of him. He was a great traveler, and became greatly attached to the boys.

In early days Mr. Winthrop had been a hunter, but his age, and a severe accident, some years previous made him an invalid, and when he became acquainted with the boys and found them very entertaining, it produced such a change in his previous morbid condition, that he planned a tour through Siam and Burma, the scenes of many of his former exploits.

Unfortunately, after a week's trip through the southern part of Siam, he was suddenly taken ill, and expired the following day. After the first severe attack he made a will, devising a certain legacy to the boys, who were to receive its benefits a year from that day, but the amount was kept a secret. In addition thereto the U. S. Consul at Bangkok was provided with a certain amount of

funds to be sent to the boys, in case of dire extremity, while on their travels.

The peculiar conditions surrounding this bequest will be better understood if the provision regarding the boys' tour is explained. As the result of a banter the boys, alluded to, had undertaken to make a tour around the world, agreeing to start with only twenty dollars in money; to stay not more than two weeks at any point; not to accumulate more than twenty dollars at any one place; and not to accept any money as a favor or by way of charity.

They were permitted to work their way from place to place, by any honorable means and, before leaving the United States, were fortunate enough to serve as detectives in behalf of the government in a very important case, which required their services from Salt Lake City to Reno, Nevada. From that source they had obtained a neat little sum of money.

Then they were fortunate enough to secure employment on board an ocean liner to Tokio; and after making a tour of Japan, had the pleasure of reengaging on the same ship on its way from Nagasaki to Hong Kong. After reaching India they still had over eighty dollars, which would take them, as they hoped, as far as the Mediterranean Sea. There they expected to get employment which would safely assure them passage to Europe.

While traveling through India they met a young man, named Robert Wenn, who had known the

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Professor in Arabia. He was very attractive, and made himself agreeable to all. Together they journeyed over the mountains and through the jungles in search of specimens.

Just ten days previous to the conversation referred to in the opening paragraphs, their new acquaintance disappeared, and with him the two purses belonging to the boys, which contained all their money, as well as their papers, including the contract which was made with their friend Mr. Castleton in New York and a letter written by their deceased friend, Mr. Winthrop.

The police were immediately notified of the theft, which had occurred in the interior of India, about three hundred miles from Bombay, and the notice to the Professor was the first indication that any steps had been taken to find the thief.

"I hope they will catch the fellow," said Stanwood. "He can have the money if he will only let us have the papers."

"Yes; I can now understand why they would be important to you," remarked the Professor, after the boys had explained the situation.

At eleven o'clock, therefore, they were at the office of the Police Administration and were immediately ushered in. The official was very courteous, but at the same time he exhibited a peculiar attitude, and began to question them in a curious way.

"Your names are,—"

"Winfield Merritt and Stanwood Bailey," said Stanwood.

"Ah, yes; and you are from New York," he volunteered, glancing at a document before him.

"Yes," answered Winfield, eagerly.

"How long have you been in India?"

"About three weeks."

"Where did you come from?"

"From Burma."

"Where did you land?"

"At Madras."

"What documents have you to establish your identities?"

"We have nothing, whatever. Everything was taken in the two purses which were stolen."

The officer looked at them in a questioning way as Winfield said this.

"You were in Bangkok, I believe?" he inquired, looking at them searchingly.

"Yes," said Stanwood.

"Did you know a Mr. Walker there?"

"He is the U. S. Consul."

"Did you expect any money from him?"

The boys glanced at each other, and each hesitated to reply. The Chief noticed the indecision, and immediately continued: "Did he promise to pay you any money?"

"No," said Winfield.

The official smiled. "Who was Mr. Winthrop?" he asked.

"He was our friend, but he died, and then told Mr. Walker to send us money if we needed it."

"Did you ever ask him for money before?"

"No."

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"Are you sure of that?"

"Yes; but why do you ask that?" said Stanwood, now visibly irritated at the course of the questionings.

"Why I ask that is not material now," replied the official. "It is sufficient that you should know that you are at present detained for further examination."

"Does that mean they are under arrest?" asked the Professor in amazement.

"It means that we have sufficient evidence to detain them, pending a full investigation of this matter. I have before me a cablegram from the U. S. Consul at Bangkok, which states that these young men wrote a letter from Madras, the day before one was written, or purporting to have been written, at Bombay," he said, as he scrutinized the boys closely.

"We never wrote a letter to Mr. Walker from Madras, but we did send one from this place," said Stanton, vehemently.

"My warrant for detaining you will be explained by this message," he said, as he handed it to the Professor. It read as follows:

"To the Chief of Police, Bombay.

"Two days ago received letter from two boys, from New York, Stanwood Bailey and Winfield Merritt, dated at Madras, together with proper letter, authorizing me to transmit funds to them in accordance with a trust agreement. Today received a letter from supposedly the same per-

sons, asking that funds be transmitted to Bombay. Think the boys in your city must be impostors. Kindly investigate and report.

“R. A. WALKER, U. S. Consul,
“Bangkok.”

The boys read it over and over, and their indignation knew no bounds.

“That fellow took our papers and sent them to Mr. Walker,” said Winfield.

“But that is not any evidence to me,” said the official. “If you had something to establish your identity, it would be different. Have you anything with you?” he asked.

“Nothing that I can think of,” said Stanwood, quietly, for he now saw the seriousness of the situation.

“Haven’t you some mark on your clothing, or a letter, or something to show that you are really the two boys named?”

“Allow me to say that I met these boys on a train, after leaving Madras. They told me the conditions under which they were making a tour of the world, and I know they had funds, and I also saw the purses which they carried. I also know about the young man Wenn, who met us near Sholapur, and attached himself to our party, and who disappeared three days thereafter. I suppose it has already occurred to you that it might be well for you to telegraph to the police at Madras to detain any one calling for mail or telegrams at Madras, as it is quite likely that Mr.

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Walker has already sent funds to the boys addressed to that place."

The official listened attentively to the Professor while talking, and answered: "I have already wired to Mr. Walker to inform me whether he has sent any funds to Madras,—"

While thus speaking, an attendant laid a telegram before him, and seizing it quickly, he read as follows: "I mailed funds to Madras yesterday, to be paid to the persons mentioned in my dispatch to you."

"This is from the U. S. Consul, and the one calling for the funds at Madras will be detained, pending a further investigation. Meanwhile I am in doubt about you."

"I will stand sponsor for them," said the Professor. "I cannot believe these boys are deceiving me. I am sure that the young man referred to is the thief."

"With those assurances you may go, but you must not change your hotel, without giving us due notice," remarked the official, "and I shall hold you responsible for their appearance here when required," he continued, as he cast a glance at the Professor.

The boys returned to the hotel with the Professor. "That was a shrewd scheme on the part of Robert. I had no idea he was a scamp," said the Professor, "but I think the plans which have been laid will catch him."

Two days after, the Professor was advised to bring the boys to the Administration office and

they could scarcely restrain themselves, when they received this information. The official greeted them less reservedly than before, an incident which they both noticed.

"The police have detained two young men in Madras who claim that you are impostors and they demand the payment of the transmitted funds. Tomorrow their photographs will reach this office. If your identification agrees, so far as the man Wenn is concerned it may help to solve the matter," he said, addressing the Professor.

"I am glad of that," said the Professor. "I know the individual well enough to point him out."

The following day the boys paced the streets anxiously, waiting for the time to visit the official and promptly at ten o'clock entered the office with the Professor.

"Have you received the photographs?" asked the Professor.

"They came the first mail this morning. Step into the next room," said the Chief, addressing the boys. They did so.

The official handed a photograph to the Professor. "At my suggestion they have included a number of other inmates of the detention station. Please point out the man called Wenn."

The Professor adjusted his glasses, and examined the group. "That is the man, somewhat disguised, or, rather, with a different suit than he had when with us," he answered.

"Call in one of the boys," he said. Winfield appeared, and the official said:

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"See if you can detect the man called Wenn."

"This is the man," said Winfield, as he pointed to the identical individual indicated by the Professor.

Stanwood's identification was as direct and positive, when called in. "This seems to be conclusive. But who is the other fellow?" he asked. "I cannot recognize any one in the group, that I know," said Stanwood.

"That seems to establish your statements as to meeting Wenn and his disappearance between night and morning. Now state what the purses contained, and whether they had any identifying marks on them."

The boys gave a complete inventory of their possessions, and the official notified the boys that they should report two days afterwards.

"But we must leave tomorrow, and cannot wait until that time," said Winfield.

"And why not?" asked the official with some vehemence.

"Because our contract says we shall not stay longer than two weeks at any place, and tomorrow is the last day," answered Winfield.

"Rather a peculiar contract, I should say."

"That is just what the contract says, and we can't wait," said Stanwood.

"I have nothing to do with the contract. You must remain," he answered, and the Professor also nodded his head in confirmation of the edict uttered by the official.

The boys returned to the hotel in an unhappy

state of mind. They were determined to go, but going presented another obstacle. They had no funds, and hesitated about explaining the full situation to the Professor. They sat in their room, the pictures of despair, for an hour or more, and then picked up their hats and sauntered out to the street.

"Well, if we wanted to go where could we go?" said Stanwood.

"To the Suez Canal, I suppose. That is the quickest way to get to the Mediterranean," answered Winfield.

"Suppose we look it up," said Stanwood.

The director gave them the addresses of the steamship companies, and they were soon in one of the offices. There, to their surprise, the information was given that the regular weekly sailings of the line had been cancelled, owing to the reported raiding of the canal by Turkish troops.

"But isn't there some way to reach Greece, or Italy?" asked Stanwood.

"Not at present," was the reply.

The boys left the offices with heavy hearts, and wandered along the streets. Notwithstanding their sad plight they had some things to anticipate in the future, but that would not help them now. While debating the question of their departure a sign loomed up before them: "Regular sailing of the SS. *Oman*, Wednesdays at 2 P. M."

"Where does that go? come on," said Winfield.

In a few minutes they were at the little office, near the dock.

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"Does the *Oman* go to the Suez Canal?" asked Stanwood.

"Oh, no! Our ships all go to the Gulf of Oman."

"Where is the Gulf of Oman?" asked Winfield.

"Well, the Straits of Oman lead directly into the Persian Gulf, and that is northwest of this point."

"How far is it?" asked Stanwood.

"The *Oman* goes about 1200 miles, but from Ormuz a small line runs to the head of the Persian Gulf, a distance of 600 miles further.

The boys consulted the maps. "Why, the head of the Persian Gulf can't be more than eight or nine hundred miles from the Mediterranean," said Stanwood.

"Oh, yes; it is fully a thousand miles," said the man.

"Is there any way to get across?" asked Winfield.

"If you are not particular in the way you travel," he answered.

"What kind of traveling do they have there?" asked Stanwood.

"Principally by camels. There are several caravan routes from Persia."

Stanwood's eyes fairly bulged. "That is the route for me, by all means. I'm in for the camels," he said.

"But the first thing is to get where the camels are," said Winfield. "Sixteen hundred miles be-

fore there's a camel in sight, and not a cent in our pocket. I wonder if there would be a chance to work our way there?" And Winfield turned to the man. "Do you ever employ any one but the regular force on your boats?" he asked.

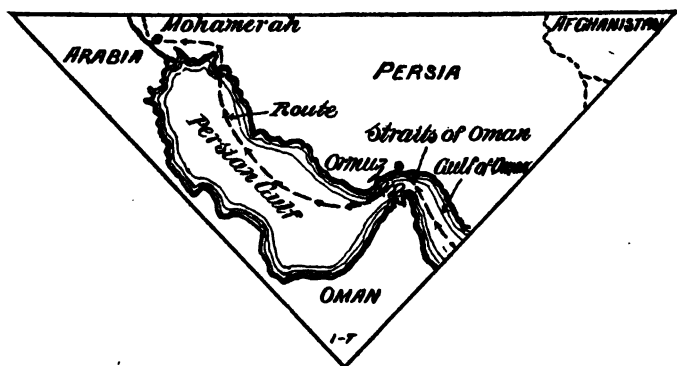
The man looked at them for a moment, and slowly said: "No; we have a full equipment, and I do not think there is any chance on the *Oman*."

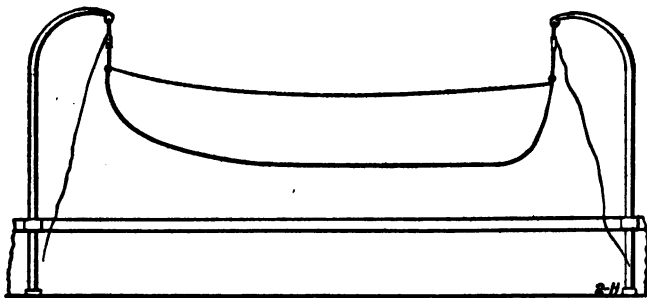
The boys explained their peculiar position, and it seemed to have some effect on him, for he advised them to call at two o'clock in the afternoon. "Possibly, I might have some news for you," he said.

The boys were there at the appointed time, but their hearts sank when he stated that there was no possibility of a place on the ship.

"What is the fare?" asked Winfield.

"Four pounds, eighteen shilling, first class, and three pounds six, second," was the answer.





CHAPTER II

IN SORE STRAITS. A FRIEND

WHEN the boys returned to the hotel they sought out the Professor only to learn that he had contracted a fever since the morning visit at the Police office. They went in, however, and explained that they had determined on sailing to the Persian Gulf on the boat the following day, but that it was impossible to get work on the ship to pay for their passage.

He listened attentively, and said: "It had been my purpose for some time to make a trip along the gulf, and since the interview yesterday it occurred to me that a good business arrangement might be effected between us that would carry you along without any difficulty."

"And how can that be done?" asked Stanwood.

"By making it a business en route to gather samples," he replied.

The boys were delighted at the proposal. "That will suit us," said Winfield enthusiastically. "But we must get away at once," he con-

tinued. While thus conversing a messenger appeared from the police official. The Professor opened the missive. "We are to be at the office at ten in the morning," he said.

"Oh, that's good," said Winfield, with a sigh of relief. "I am sure they have that fixed all right now."

"Then we shall try to sail on that boat; what do you say the name is?" inquired the Professor.

"The *Oman*."

"Go down and reserve two rooms at once. Simply give them your name and the pay will be arranged for in the morning."

The boys were not slow in complying. "That is a good business arrangement," said Stanwood. "I wonder how much there is in it?" he remarked, referring to the offer to take such specimens as the boys might gather.

After returning to the hotel the Professor said: "It had entirely escaped me, and I am ashamed of myself; but you have no funds. Here is a sovereign. That was very stupid of me to forget it."

The boys accepted the coin with many thanks. Their room and board were being paid for by the Professor so they had no reason to complain on that score, but it was a very trying thing to walk past the picture shows day after day without enough funds to take them in.

When they left the hotel that afternoon there was no inquiry on the part of either concerning the way in which the afternoon should be spent. They entered the first moving picture show that

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was in their path, and forgot, for the time being, all their woes.

During the night the Professor's fever increased, and the physician who was called in stated that the condition was not at all grave, but it would be necessary to have absolute rest for several days. This statement did not assure the boys as they felt they must leave Bombay before twelve o'clock that night.

In the morning they were compelled to go to the police office without the Professor and found, to their delight that the officials at Madras had learned the identity of their late friend, Robert Wenn. The funds transmitted to Madras had been ordered sent to Bombay, and were then in charge of the officer.

The Consul, Mr. Walker, after his cablegram had suspected that the Madras claimants were spurious so he sent a cable warning to Madras, after he had sent a cable to Madras asking certain questions which he knew only the genuine boys would know. Wenn was a confidence man, with a record, whose last exploits at Singapore caused him to flee to India.

"How much money did he send?" asked Winfield.

"Ten pounds," answered the official

"That is about fifty dollars," said Stanwood.

It was nearly twelve o'clock before all the formalities were complied with, and the boys received the funds. They were eager to reach the hotel and inform the Professor, but on returning

were told that he was in a serious condition. This was, indeed, disappointing. The situation was plain, however. The contract called for them to leave within two weeks. That time expired at midnight. There was no other course open but to take the *Oman*, which sailed at two o'clock, or to start out on foot.

"Let us write a letter to the Professor, tell him the situation, and inform him where we are going. He may follow us later, when he gets better," said Winfield.

"Somehow it doesn't seem right to leave him here in this way, but what can we do?" responded Stanwood.

It was, indeed, a difficult matter to settle. Just imagine the condition yourself. What would you have done under the circumstances?

"I can see only one thing to do; and that is to write the letter, and sail. I am sure the Professor would not have advised otherwise."

The letter was written, the hotel bill of \$16.30 paid, and they left the hotel with their knapsacks, and few personal belongings, and hurried down to the dock. On the way the shipping office was passed where the large valise was in waiting, and securing that, they appeared at the steamship office where two second class tickets to Ormuz were bought.

After taking possession of their cabin they sat down and counted up the funds still remaining, which was found to amount to nine dollars and ten cents, reckoned in U. S. money. The *Oman*

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was a small steamer, not exceeding 3000 tons displacement, but it was well fitted up, and the cabin roomy and comfortable.

All the attendants on board were native East Indians, very polite and accommodating. The passengers in the second cabin were coast traders, Indian merchants, and dealers in Persian rugs, most of them returning after their usual trips to Karachi and the Gulf towns. A dozen or more Europeans attracted their attention, one of them being particularly noticeable on account of his height, which the boys estimated must be considerably over six feet.

For three shillings they secured two deck chairs, and installed them on the port side. An hour afterward the tall man occupied the chair alongside, and, as usual, they struck up an acquaintance with their neighbor.

"So you are making a tour of the world?" he asked, adding, "This is my fourth trip along the coast."

"Where are you bound?" asked Stanwood.

"Karachi, about six hundred miles from Bombay. From that point I intend to go through Baluchistan, after ascending the Indus, to Shikapur, and then make my way to Kandahar, in Afghanistan."

"I have heard about Kandahar," said Winfield.

"Yes, it is one of the greatest commercial centers in that section of the world. It was founded by Alexander the Great."

"Then probably you can give us some informa-

tion about the route to take after we reach the head of the Persian Gulf. We want to get to the Mediterranean Sea by the most direct route," said Stanwood.

"You should have taken the course through the Indian Ocean, by way of Aden," he replied.

"We wanted to do that, but they have withdrawn the sailings, on account of the war."

"Yes; I understand so; this steamer goes only as far as Bander Abbas, a short distance beyond Ormuz, but from that point you can get a coasting vessel which will take you as far as Ras Bisha, at the head of the Gulf. From that point you must depend on the caravans which cross the Syrian, or the Nefud deserts."

"Thank you for the information. Do you know what the fare is from Ormuz to Ras Bisha?"

"Second class it is about two pounds."

It was late the evening of the following day before the vessel steamed up the bay and docked at Karachi, and their tall friend bade them adieu. They engaged a room at a nearby hotel, and immediately inquired as to the prospects of taking passage on a coaster which ran through the gulf.

The information was obtained about a steamer which was then loading at a wharf below, so the next morning a visit was made and they were delighted to learn that the ship would sail at noon. In answer to their inquiries as to the cost, and whether there was any chance to secure employment aboard, they were referred to the office of the company.

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A call at the place indicated resulted in disappointment, as no places were vacant. The steamer was advertised to sail at twelve o'clock. They had less than eight dollars, about eleven dollars short of what was necessary to land them at the head of the Gulf. Returning to their room they sat down and began to reflect.

"There are some things we have forgotten," said Stanwood.

"What?" asked Winfield.

"We should have written to Mr. Walker," he answered.

"Wasn't that a stupid thing to forget? We never even acknowledged it. What will he think of us."

"We will do so now. But where is our writing paper?" said Stanwood, as he fished around in his knapsack. "I know," he continued. "We must have left it at the hotel in Bombay. That is too bad."

Winfield jumped up and ran downstairs, returning with a supply of writing material. "You must tell him what route we are taking, and that from the head of the Persian Gulf we intend to go across Arabia to Palestine, and from Jerusalem try and reach the Sea, either at Joppa or at Beirut," said Winfield, as he entered the room.

"Very well, you write to the people at home, while I am doing this," answered Stanwood.

They were almost in despair, as the morning wore away. The prospect of getting something to do in the city was not at all encouraging. It is a

commercial city, of less than 100,000 population, and while it is British, the foreign population is very small, and the large native population, with the low wages paid for the most difficult work, made it a hard task to get any employment which was remunerative, so the boat left without them.

The next sailing would be three days later, but in the meantime the boys were not idle. They visited the houses and stores with the English names, but met with discouraging responses everywhere. It was getting to be desperate, as their funds on the third day totaled only three dollars.

"I am going down to the boat,—the one that sails at noon today, board it, and hide until it is well under way," said Winfield, with determination in his voice.

Stanwood laughed, as he recalled two instances of stowaways on the *Shanya Muro*. "I am with you," he said. An hour before the sailing time they wandered down to the dock, and walked up the gang plank. After hunting around for a cozy and secure spot they waited until the last call before repairing to the place selected. In due time the vessel pulled out and cleared, while the boys congratulated themselves.

Long before they cleared Cape Mouzeh, the boys left their place of concealment, and immediately ran into the purser's clerk, who demanded their tickets. This was, indeed, an embarrassing position. They tried to explain the situation, but failed to make much headway. The clerk finally

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left, and the boys congratulated themselves on the result of their ruse.

But they were soon disillusioned. The little ship was moving toward the point, and a smartly-dressed official walked up to them brusquely and said: "This will be a good place to get off," and nodded his head toward the shore.

"I suppose we shall have to go," said Stanwood, almost in tears.

A boat was being swung outwardly on the davits, when a man came up and said: "Is that you, Stanwood?"

The latter hardly recognized the sunburnt man. His eyes lighted up as he sprang forward and grasped the man's hand. "Is this Mr. Norton?" he asked.

"Yes, indeed; and I am awfully glad to see you," he replied.

"We are in trouble," said Winfield.

"In trouble, eh! And what is up now?"

"Well, I suppose we are what you call stow-aways; that is, we are out of money, and we just made up our minds that we would keep on going, and they are just lowering the boat to put us off," said Stanwood.

Mr. Norton laughed, and the official, who had now approached to inform them that the boat was ready, stopped as Mr. Norton turned to him and said: "So you are going to put off these boys, eh? Oh, no; they are traveling with me," and he burst into another fit of laughter.

"See here," he said, addressing the official,

"these are American boys,—bound to make it, you know; just a little out of luck, and they took the most direct way to get there. I owe these boys something, and this is a good time to pay the debt."

A little explanation may be necessary here. On the trip from San Francisco to Japan, the boys had secured employment on the Pacific steamer, and it was through the work of Stanwood that a gang of card sharpers was discovered and the fleeced victims enabled to recover their money.

Mr. Norton was one of the victims of the gang. "The boys are traveling first class, Mr. Purser," he said. "You might as well haul in the boat."

"But, Mr. Norton, we don't want you to—"

"Pay no attention to them," continued Mr. Norton. "The cabin next to mine is vacant. I suppose there will be no objections to their occupying that?" he asked.

The official bowed low and said: "It is as you wish, Mr. Norton. Come forward," he said, addressing the boys.

They fairly danced along the deck, while Mr. Norton looked at them and smiled. "Isn't this just dandy?" said Stanwood.

"But we felt awfully blue this morning," said Winfield. And then the boys related their wanderings, and for more than an hour kept Mr. Norton hypnotized with their reminiscences.

"I think that is the most wonderful thing I ever heard. To think how you have managed to come out on top sounds like a romance and I just hap-

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pened to come in at the nick of time," and he commenced another roar of laughter, in which the boys joined.

"Now, then," he continued, "you remember the two fellows who fleeced us on the *Shinyu Maru*?"

"Yes."

"How much do you think they tried to get from me?"

"I haven't the least idea," said Stanwood.

"About twelve hundred dollars," he replied.

"You see, your work saved me that amount; so I have concluded it would be a good idea to divide that."

"What do you mean?" asked Winfield.

"Why, that you boys are entitled to half of it, anyway."

"We wouldn't dare take it," said Stanwood.

He looked at the boys a moment, and then with a smile in his eyes, asked: "And who would prevent you?"

"Our contract says we cannot take more than twenty dollars at any one place," said Winfield.

"Oh, no!" broke in Stanwood; "it says we must not *accumulate* more than twenty dollars at any one place."

At this information there was another roar of laughter, after which Mr. Norton inquired: "So you had a contract? Let me see it."

"It's gone," said Winfield.

"Oh, that was stolen? Ah, ha! Can't accumulate more than twenty dollars in any one place. All right. I'll just give you that amount in in-

stallments, at different places," he said with a broad grin.

"That would be charity," said Stanwood, "and the contract says we mustn't accept charity."

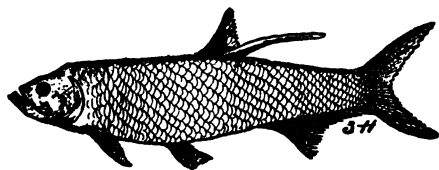
"It does, eh? Well, it isn't charity, but it is a favor to me."

"It also says we mustn't accept *favors*, either," said Winfield.

Mr. Norton's laughter was in evidence again. It was infectious, as all real laughter is, and the boys joined. "All right, then, say no more about it. I'll see the purser now. I want to have a long talk with you after I return. Possibly I can make some suggestions."

When he had gone the boys sat there amazed at the turn of affairs. They could hardly conceive of a more peculiar situation, considering they had been actually rescued at the last moment.





CHAPTER III

IN THE PERSIAN GULF

"THIS little tub is a slow thing, always out of order, and it never can be relied upon, so I am informed. We shall have a good three day trip, at least. Tomorrow we get into the fishing belt, when we may expect some rare sport," said Mr. Norton, as he met the boys later in the evening.

"How do they fish? Right from the boat?" asked Winfield.

"They troll; do you see the heavy lines on the stern?"

"We noticed them when we were hunting a place to stay," said Stanwood.

"What kind of fish are caught with those lines?"

"Immense black bass, and also a species of tarpon, similar to those found on the coast of Florida and in the waters of Southern California."

"We are interested in knowing where you are going," said Stanwood.

"I am booked for a hunting expedition in western Persia. I suppose you are trying to reach Constantinople, or some other port on the Mediterranean?"

"Yes."

"Then it would be well to go up the river Euphrates to the vicinity of Babylon and it will be an easy matter to join one of the caravans which go across the desert."

"This is Persia to the right of us, is it not?" asked Stanwood.

"Yes; I have been here several times, as the United States Consul at Teheran is a near relative, and together we frequently hunt in the mountainous regions."

"Is Persia mountainous? I thought it was nothing but plains," said Winfield.

"There are many high ranges in the north, directly south of the Caspian Sea. The centre of the country, however, consists of vast plains of sand and rock. Only about one-third of the entire area of the country is capable of being tilled. The southwestern section, along the region drained by the Tigris and the Euphrates, is the most fertile in the entire country, and is really beautiful at all times of the year."

The following day the fishermen began to arrange their lines, an operation which the boys watched intently. At the stern of the little vessel two spars were arranged to project out laterally, the distance between the extremities of the spars being about sixty feet.

Four lines were secured so as to trail from the stern, two of them from the extremities of these spars, so that the lines were thus twenty feet apart. They were fed out through pulley blocks, so they could be easily and quickly handled.

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Each line was about five hundred feet long, and the hooks, which were quite large, were baited with salt meat. In the afternoon the men who handled the fishing gear were lined up, the hooks baited with meat, which was tied on with wire, and each line reeled out full length.

A man took up a position at each line, the hand grasping the line about two feet from the point where it passed through the pulley. Every minute or so he would give the line a side pull to ascertain whether it had hooked a fish or not. The boat was making a speed not exceeding fifteen miles an hour.

One of the outer lines was the first to make a catch. The moment the fisherman on guard was sure he crawled in over the spar and lent a hand at the reel. The end of the line was brought in fully two hundred feet before the boys could see the fish.

"That must be a big fellow," said Winfield, now excited at the sport.

"What a jump that was," remarked Stanwood, as the fish darted up and lashed its tail. Do you know what it is?"

"It looks like a big bass," said Mr. Norton.

The men at the reel continued turning slowly and every moment the fish came closer, while the passengers crowded to the rail, as far as the ropes would permit. Every time the fish would slash its tail, a most vicious spray would result. It was an enormous black specimen at the end of a line which was now less than fifty feet from the stern.

Gradually the line grew shorter and the struggles became fiercer. It is at the landing period that the most care must be observed. By degrees the fish was brought up so it was dragged along the surface of the water by the line which ran up to the spar at an angle of forty-five degrees.

The reel turned only a few inches at a time now, and when the tail was clear of the water the onlookers beheld an enormous specimen. After it was deposited on deck the natives began a chatter, and bedlam seemed to break loose. The boys saw money being held up, and one of them began to gather it in.

"What is all this row about?" asked Stanwood.

"This is one of their regular sports; betting on the weight of the fish."

"Hello! they have another one on the inner line," said Winfield.

The character of this catch was apparent at once, as the catch offered far more resistance than the previous one, and the faces of the men showed the difference in the fish hooked.

"That must be a tarpon, by the way it struggles. We shall see some fun with that fellow if he is a big one."

It was, indeed, a tarpon, not particularly large, but it made a most vigorous fight, leaping out of the water by side rushes, and it was a sight to see how, after leaving the water, it would bend itself into U-shaped forms. The tarpon is one of the gamest fish in existence. It will take a hook unbaited, so vigorous is it in the pursuit of any

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object which appears to have life. It feeds voraciously on smaller fish, and is a most rapid swimmer.

This latter fact is one which makes the sport so exciting. The moment it is hooked the fisherman must keep the line taut, otherwise its swift motion will enable it to shake off the hook. It was now observed that as it rushed with terrific speed toward the boat, the men at the reel would frantically endeavor to take in the line fast enough.

Over two hundred feet had been taken in, when, in an unguarded moment, it leaped high and forwardly, and the line was free. There was an audible groan from fifty throats, which was only appeased when the guard at the other interior line announced a catch. This also was a tarpon, the cry of "*megal*" being sufficient to tell the boys that another of the same kind had been hooked.

When it was landed and the natives had made a full examination the shouting and bantering was again resumed. This same process was repeated with every catch. Ten good specimens were caught during the afternoon, all of them tarpons but two, so that they had tarpon steak from that time forward at every meal.

The largest bass weighed 420 pounds, and the heaviest tarpon turned the scales at 165 pounds. Bass has a very strong flavor, but the natives on these boats consider them delicacies. When so told by Mr. Norton, Winfield remarked:

"Well, people who can eat rancid butter and

enjoy it can certainly eat the meat from those black fellows."

There was no particular diversion on deck except fishing, and this grew tame and uninteresting the second afternoon, particularly when it was noticed that the steamer was drifting along and making not to exceed six or eight miles an hour. The boat was due at the mouth of the Shatt-el-Arab before six o'clock that evening, and it was fully four in the afternoon when one of the deck hands announced that they were still seventy-five miles from the bar. This river receives the waters of the Tigris and the Euphrates, which unite ninety miles north from the gulf.

At five o'clock the vessels stopped. Mr. Norton and the boys went forward to ascertain the cause of the delay, and were soon informed that the propeller shaft was broken. To their right was a headland, not more than two miles away. The steamer began to whistle violently and for some time the screeching continued.

"I suppose they are calling for help," said Mr. Norton. They lay thus for an hour, when a small vessel, evidently propelled by power, appeared in the distance, and was soon alongside. After some delay a cable was attached and the little steamer started for the shore, laboriously pulling their vessel, the utmost speed being less than two miles an hour.

The point was rounded before darkness set in and an anchor reeled out, with the ship less than two hundred feet from the shore line. "I sup-

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pose we are here for the night," said Mr. Norton. "I must see my friend the purser; he can give us some information."

"I am afraid we shall have to stay here a day, or more, as we must wait for a tub which can take us to our dock. It is safe to say that we cannot, in any event, leave this place until day after tomorrow morning as the tug would not attempt to take us up in the night, and it cannot arrive until tomorrow afternoon."

The best had to be made of the situation. In the morning the six boats were used by passengers and crew to row parties over to the shore and the boys and Mr. Norton were the first to take advantage of the trip, by way of diversion.

After landing, the boys could scarcely restrain themselves; it felt so good to be on land again. The place where they came ashore was full of sand and rocks, being absolutely desolate. There was no beach, but rather a precipitous shore, so at the suggestion of Mr. Norton they scaled the cliffs, and soon had a view of the interior.

Everything beyond was a living green and as they stood on the little elevation, Mr. Norton said: "I have had in mind a scheme that might interest you."

"What is it?" exclaimed the boys eagerly.

"We might make a trip on foot through this section and go around the head of the gulf to Mohammerah, instead of waiting for the old boat. What do you think of the idea?" he asked.

"That will suit me," said Winfield, as his eyes flashed.

"Here too," chimed in Stanwood. "But we must make arrangements about our things on the boat."

"By all means," replied Mr. Norton. "Why waste time? Let us go back at once, and have our things shipped to Mohammerah."

"Where is that?"

"On the Shatt-el-Arab, about forty miles north of its mouth; we must go there in any event and I should like to take a look in this section."

They quickly made their way to the boat, were rowed over and after giving full instructions as to the disposition of their baggage, rowed back to land. "I feel as though we were going to have another holiday," said Stanwood.

"So you have been having holidays, in these jaunts, eh?" said Mr. Norton. "Now, tell me, where did you enjoy these walking trips the most?"

"That is hard to say," answered Winfield. "It was fine in Japan. We didn't do much in Siam, because it was so hot; but Burma was dandy."

"But we had the most exciting times in India and we saw a great many funny things there," said Stanwood.

"Well, we may see some things which are just as curious here. I understand that this part is pretty well settled, and I do not think we shall

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have much trouble in getting plenty to eat on the way."

"Persia always seems such an out-of-the-way place, to me," said Winfield.

"That is true; the people of the world have lost all interest in these old countries. But Persia has a great history. It is claimed that the Garden of Eden was here. This is the place that Abraham came from, and it is where Daniel prophesied. It was the home of the Wise Men of the East, and Persia restored the Jews and took them back to their native land from the Assyrians who had made them captives."

They walked for an hour to the north, before meeting any of the inhabitants, although there was evidence long before that of the existence of an agricultural population. Finally a house was sighted. It was crudely built of stone but strong and picturesque in appearance.

"In this section, I am told, this is the character of most of the dwellings. They are really forts, and were put up to protect the owners from robbers. The top seems to be covered with the green shrubbery which I have seen in many places throughout the northern and middle sections," said Mr. Norton, as they stopped to take a survey of the building.

While thus observing the building they noticed several women in the rear of the house, milking cows. "You will see the women engaged in that work everywhere here, as well as in working in the fields," said Mr. Norton.

"So they don't care much for the women here, do they?" remarked Stanwood.

"No; women are not highly regarded in any of these countries, excepting in Burma."

On all sides were beautiful palm trees, some with immense leaves, and while walking along the road both boys saw, almost simultaneously, an apple tree, with fruit. "This looks like home," said Winfield. "This is the first time I have seen an apple tree since we left the United States. I didn't know they had apples over here."

"Why, of course, they have. Don't you remember they had apples in the Garden of Eden?" said Stanwood.

"That's so; I had forgotten about that," remarked Winfield.

Mr. Norton gave vent to one of his hearty laughs, as he said: "But it is claimed that the apple which Eve gave Adam was a quince. This is a great quince country. They are not tough, nor astringent, like the fruit in the states, but mellow and sweet, and with a very strong quince flavor."

"I hope we shall be able to try some of them," said Stanwood.

As they advanced into the interior more and more fruit came into view. Here were observed fig trees, fully laden, pomegranates, which the boys had first found in Siam, and dates, the latter being especially interesting, for they were in the right time of the year to witness a gathering of this delightful fruit.

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The fruit itself grows in large clusters and each tree will produce from five hundred to a thousand pounds each season. The fruit grows at an altitude of forty or fifty feet and after it is plucked the gatherer deposits it in a sack, and lowers it to those in waiting below.

"This is one-half of the food of the people throughout the date-producing sections," said Mr. Norton. "Several species are used for extracting juice, which, when boiled down, makes sugar; and some varieties produce sago."

Among the other fruits they noticed peaches, plums, apricots, pears and grapes, and their delight was great at the sight of a patch of watermelons. This was too much for them, and they quickly made terms with the owner for two large juicy ones.

"What did they cost?" asked Mr. Norton.

"I don't know," replied Stanwood. "I gave him two of the Indian coins, and he smiled and nodded his head pretty fast."

"That was about five cents, as the anna is worth about two and a half cents," said Mr. Norton.

The melon was delicious, and while eating it Mr. Norton said:

"That reminds me; I wonder whether they have any muskmelons here? If so I promise you a treat."

"Well these watermelons are about as much as I can get away with," said Winfield.

"Later in the afternoon we might make an ef-

fort to cultivate an acquaintance with their muskmelons."

"Why? What is there about them so wonderful?" asked Stanwood.

"It is not, probably, due to the quality of the seed, but to the way in which they are raised, that gives them a rare flavor," answered Mr. Norton. As he said this he motioned to the Persian who stood nearby, and spoke a few words. The man nodded, and Mr. Norton followed. The latter beckoned to the boys to accompany him.

They were led to a small patch, probably less than a half acre in extent. "Here is a muskmelon patch, and the melons are ripe," said Mr. Norton.

The boys laughed, for nowhere was a melon in sight. Mr. Norton waited quietly, with a smile, and said: "We shall see who is taken in on this joke." After a few words to the proprietor, the latter stooped down, and carefully brushed aside the earth, and there beneath a thin covering was a delicious-looking melon, not large but of a dark yellow color. This was handed to Mr. Norton.

"Smell that," he said, handing it in turn to Winfield. "It smells too good. Let us have some of them," was the latter's comment.

"I thought so," remarked Mr. Norton.

So between the apples, pomegranates, figs, brown, soft, and deliciously sweet, and the watermelons and muskmelons, the boys and Mr. Norton spent an afternoon of luxury, until they were too full for utterance.

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"I don't feel much like walking," said Stanwood. "I don't think walking is good right after a meal."

"That's true," said Mr. Norton, "particularly when the meal is a continuous performance."

"But I think that was a funny thing to bury the muskmelons," said Winfield as he recalled their last treat.

"That is the custom here, and its exceeding sweetness and fine flavor is due to that, as it absorbs moisture from the earth, which also assists it in growing and maturing."

The first village of any importance which was reached in the afternoon was called Mashur, not more than two miles east of the gulf, and as accommodations in the country were not very comfortable it was determined to put up for the night at this place. After some investigation they found what was there called a *shopu*, where travelers stopped.

A peep into some of the houses, not far away, showed that people were not the only occupants of the houses. In one place they observed a cow, a diminutive buffalo and two pigs, safely harbored at one end of a single-roomed house, while the children played on the floor at the other end.

The boys were ushered into a room, probably fifteen feet square, adjoining a similar one occupied by Mr. Norton. There was not a single article of furniture in it, excepting the rugs and mats which practically covered the floor space. Prominent among these was a pillow-like mat

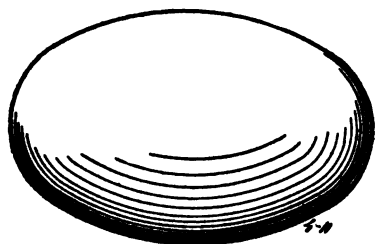
which, the boys were informed, were used as seats instead of chairs.

The meal was served in large trays, elevated about a foot from the floor, and was started by a first course consisting of a peculiar kind of bread which Mr. Norton called *martoooha*.

"It hasn't a bad taste," said Winfield, as he tried a sample. "I wonder what it is made of?"

"It is a mixture of flour, molasses and butter, and is the bread used in all their sacrifices, which take place when they are praying for the recovery of a sick person. It is always eaten in the presence of the sick person, who must repeat, while eating it, the words: 'God restore you to health.'"





CHAPTER IV

PERSIA AND ITS CURIOUS PEOPLE

It was not a difficult matter to make up a bed for sleeping, with the different mats and rugs. In fact, many of the Persian rooms are so provided with these mats that by throwing them together a most comfortable mattress is provided. This can better be understood, when it is explained that all these rugs, tapestries, mats, and articles of that kind, are made of wool.

Persia is noted for its rugs. Their sheep are the finest in the world and everybody is a natural weaver. Their faculty for coloring is marvelous, and all carpetings are woven on designs which are individual in their character, so that there are not two rugs alike, and it is not often the case that a Persian rug is the same at both ends or so woven that the sides match each other.

There is no substitution of cotton or hemp for wool in these rugs, for hemp and cotton cost more than wool and the natives know how to handle, and dye wool better than they do cotton.

When they awoke next morning and were ready

for breakfast, Winfield said: "I cannot help thinking about that bread martooha, and the superstition connected with it. They have many singular things of that kind in India."

"But the Indians cannot be compared with these people when it comes to superstitions. They are more deeply dyed in this than all of the eastern people, excepting, possibly, the Arabians," answered Mr. Norton.

After breakfast, in which tea entered as an element, instead of coffee, a little martooha, and a quantity of fruit, they had an opportunity to examine the houses and observe the people. What particularly struck the boys was the generally corpulent condition of the people. They were not at all emaciated, as in India, where the people look as though they are half starved.

The men are rather tall, have high foreheads, black hair, a prominent aquiline nose, and heavy chins. Their skin is a dark olive, and in many sections the tint is very light. Usually they are of a gay and lively disposition, but are prone to be treacherous, and easily excited to anger.

The houses are all substantially built, the principal material, except along the coast, being mud. Persian mud is a different article from the kind we are acquainted with. It is the kind that *sticks*. This will explain why mud is such a favorable building product.

When a house is to be built, a ditch is made, usually very shallow, to indicate where the outer wall is to be, and a section of the earth within this

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space is turned up and water poured on. This is then tramped over and mixed, the mixing process being carried on by the bare feet.

At one place more than two dozen boys were seen with bare legs marching around in a puddle of this kind, while several men were taking out the mixed mass and thickening it by the admixture of dry earth. This was then placed on top of a wall which had been built two or three days previously.

After this batch was thus laid on, time would have to be given for that to dry, and so on, day after day, a new course would be put on. Such walls are usually about two feet thick. The roof, however, is the principal feature. As wood is scarce, the logs required for the roof, are very expensive, the cost being more than for the material of the entire building.

On top of the logs is a covering of the same mud, which is usually about eighteen inches deep, and in course of time the entire top or roof will be covered with vegetation, and during the dry season this must be watered, or it will wither and die.

"It seems to me that is a very curious way to build a house," said Winfield, as he watched the progress of the work.

"You will notice that the houses are very substantial, since the mud dries and becomes very hard," said Mr. Norton.

"But I was thinking about having grass on the roof and keeping it green," replied Winfield.

"There is an object in that," said Mr. Norton.

"This is a very warm country and has no rain for a period of six months. If they did not keep the roofs green the mud would crack, and repairs would be necessary all the time."

"I wonder how long that has been the custom here?"

"Probably for thousands of years."

"Why do you think so?" asked Stanwood.

"It is certain that as far back as the time of David, who says in the Psalms, 'Let them be as grass upon the housetops, which withereth before it groweth up.'"

While thus wandering about, a bell was being violently rung, and the workmen, as well as those on the streets, dropped down on their knees, and mumbled something with moving lips. Not all, however. It was observed that fully a third went on with their work, and paid not the slightest attention to those who were in their devotions.

"The ones praying are the Mohammedans, and the one who is coming along ringing the bell is called the Mollah. He does this three times a day, and all the faithful must then engage in prayer," said Mr. Norton.

"Did you notice that man who made those peculiar antics; you see he is looking about for a place to kneel down," said Winfield.

Mr. Norton looked to the man indicated, and smiled. "Oh, no," he said. "The trouble with him is that there are several women there, and he is trying to avoid them."

"Why?"

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“He must not pray in presence of a woman, or must be at least twelve feet distant from her, or his appeal to Mohammed will be unavailing.”

In front of an open, tent-like dwelling they met the first nomads for which this part of the country is famous. A little urchin, almost nude, looked up at the boys wonderingly. “How do you do?” said Winfield gravely, shaking hands with him. The mother smiled as they passed on.

Notwithstanding all houses have not more than two rooms, and the floors are simply hard beaten clay, they have a profusion of rugs and mats. The better class of houses are distinguished by having the most of these rugs of silk; and the mats or stools of wool, used for seats, and called *humuds*, are much thicker, so they form low stools.

Everywhere the visitor, on entering, removes his shoes, but keeps on his hat. At home it would be as impolite for a visitor to remove his shoes as to wear his hat in the presence of the hostess. These little oddities make us smile, but on sanitary grounds alone the custom of removing the shoes is an excellent one.

The meals had bread as the principal feature; and meat, when served, was always in the form of a stew and no meal was complete without onions. At the noon meal, which they happened to take at a house far removed from a village, they enjoyed a dish of vegetables which the hostess called *aash*. It was particularly good, or else the boys were very hungry.

"Have you any idea what this is?" asked Norton.

"No; it seems as though I have tasted something like it before," replied Stanwood.

"It is beet tops and celery cooked together in buttermilk," he answered.

"Buttermilk? I didn't know they had butter here. I haven't seen anything but this oil since we landed," said Winfield.

"That is butter," said Mr. Norton.

"Butter!" exclaimed Stanwood, as he drew back in disgust.

"Yes, indeed; it hasn't a bad taste, has it?"

"No," he replied hesitatingly.

"All butter is boiled, so that it remains in an oily state, and is thus prevented from turning rancid. In this climate butter soon becomes very strong and unpalatable to these people."

"Why don't they keep it cool with ice?"

Mr. Norton laughed. "In all this section south of the mountains, such a thing as ice is never known. It would be a very expensive luxury."

That evening a small village was reached twelve miles north of Mashur, where accommodations were found for the night. It was a little inn, containing six rooms, all on the ground floor, the building being in the form of an L, and the kitchen was located in a single room in the fork of the L.

The interior of the kitchen could be seen plainly, as the sides were open. "That may interest you," said Mr. Norton, pointing to it, and calling

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attention to the smoke which was pouring out through the windows. "It is a sample of the stove which they use. We might go over and examine it."

The stove was in one corner. It was made of clay, cylindrical in form, about two and a half feet in diameter, and four feet high, with two holes near the bottom to admit air. It had no chimney, the smoke being permitted to escape through the open top, and find its way to the outer air through the window openings.

"A mass of hot embers and glowing cinders was in the body of the stove, while the cook was just taking out several vessels, which were standing within, and had commenced to rake out the fire.

Near the stove was a woman engaged in kneading dough, which she spread out into little flat cakes, about the size of a small saucer. When the fire had been removed these cakes were taken up singly and slapped against the inner surface of the cylindrical stove. They readily adhered to the sides, and were quickly baked.

At noon of that day they reached a town of some importance, called Gada. Here was a business section, the principal stores being for the vending of groceries. In this place they saw the first camels, as well as horses. Numerous children were playing about, but in groups which did not seem to intermingle.

"The reason they do not play together indiscriminately is, that the people must observe each

other's religion. A Mahommedan will not permit his children to play with a Nestorian, nor with a Parsee, and a Buddhist abhors all the others."

"What are the Nestorians?" asked Winfield.

"They have a religion closely allied to the Jewish belief; they have no faith in the Trinity, and while they think that Christ was a good man, do not believe he was divine. The Parsees are fire worshippers, and Zoroaster was the founder of the religion. He believed there were two gods, one called Ormusd, who is a good god, and the other Ahraman, who is the wicked one. Their bible is called the Zendavesta."

In one quarter of the open space was a group of boys, not over fifteen years old, engaged in a game of Persian ball. This attracted them immediately, and they stood there watching the progress of the play. The ball was about six inches in diameter, but apparently was made of light material, for it was batted from one side to the other by means of the fist.

The players, ten on each side, were ranged along in three rows, three being in each row, standing about eight feet apart, and the captain, or commander, stood in front of the first row a few feet. At one side, midway between the two crews, was an umpire. At the shout of something which sounded like *ru-u-u*, vigorously pronounced, the ball was thrown from one side to the other, and the ball struck by the fist and propelled back in that way.

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From the nature of the contest the boys quickly divined some of the fine points of the game, as the following conversation will show:

"The game is something like tennis," observed Winfield, "for the point is to make the ball touch the ground anywhere across that middle line, and,—that is just what I thought; do you see, they are not permitted to touch the ball with anything but the fist."

While saying this the ball rolled to the ground near the end of one set of players, and one of them jumped with his legs astride the ball, with his back to the opposing players. In that position he stooped down, and with his arm incurved, struck the ball a blow that raised it from the earth and sped it to the opponents.

"I wonder why he did it in that way," said Stanwood. "Do you see that? the fellow on the other side hit it exactly that way. I suppose there is a reason for that."

Winfield stooped down to imitate the motion, and shook his head. "I noticed it several times," he remarked, "and,—why that fellow didn't stoop over it and strike it in that manner. I want to know about that," and they drew still nearer.

During a temporary pause in the game, the umpire approached the boys. Mr. Norton, who had acquired a partial use of the language, said that the boys, Winfield and Stanwood, were from New York, and that Winfield was an adept at the game. This caused considerable excitement when the um-

pire informed the teams, and all of them crowded around them, and began to ask questions. These were answered through Mr. Norton, and the points of the game explained at the request of Winfield.

"He says that the ball must not be touched by anything but the fist. The opposite side takes two points if it is moved by the foot either designedly or by accident," said Mr. Norton.

"If that is the case," said Winfield, "the players are not apt to crowd together very close." When Mr. Norton explained this observation the village boys smiled, as it showed an acute appreciation of Winfield's statement.

"Ask them if they know anything about the American game of football," said Stanwood.

After making the inquiry, Mr. Norton said: "Yes, they have heard of it, but haven't the least idea how it is played. They want to know about it."

Winfield smiled, and requested them to toss over the ball. When he had grasped it he said: "This is entirely too soft and light." When this was interpreted, one of them held up his hand, and sprinted away.

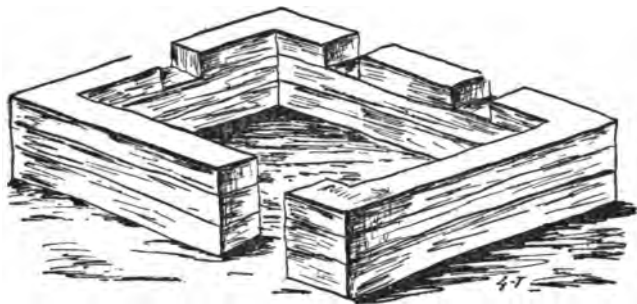
After some conversation Mr. Norton informed Winfield that the boy had gone for another ball. He soon returned, bearing another and much heavier ball. "Now, you must explain how the players are to be located," said Winfield, and after the two teams were properly disposed, with Winfield on one side and Stanwood on the other,

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instructions were given to show how the ball was to be kicked or carried to the goals.

At the first game there was a scrimmage, the boys piling pell mell over each other in the eagerness to get the ball, and the cheering and clapping that greeted Stanwood, when his side won, would have made any American boy happy.

The hour spent by the boys on the field made them many friends, and as they were about to depart the villagers gathered around and insisted on their remaining. "There is really no reason why we should go on tonight," said Mr. Norton. "It isn't often that you get a chance to teach these easterners such a lively game. American football will be the sport from this time to come, if I am any judge of their sentiments."





CHAPTER V

GAMES, CEREMONIES AND CUSTOMS

THE town boasted a population of about twelve hundred. Before the last game was over all the boys in the town were present, to witness the new departure. The excitement brought out many of the older people, and among them two Englishmen, who greeted the boys and Mr. Norton with a great deal of pleasure.

They, together with Mr. Norton, acted as interpreters. People in all eastern towns are a great deal like children, and quickly make friends. On this occasion, here, as elsewhere, the evening was given over to merriment. It was an opportunity for picnicking, as we would call it at home. ,

In all Persian towns, and even in the large cities, policemen are never in evidence during the day-time, nor are they seen until nine o'clock in the evening. At that time they are out in force, for then the population must be indoors, and are expected to go to bed. The police came at the regu-

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lation time, but the merry-makers did not heed them on this occasion, and the fun went on just the same.

Dancing commenced after this time, the weird, swinging steps of which the Easterners are noted; but the most interesting were the professional dancers who were found here, as elsewhere, and without whom no occasion could be properly celebrated. The women and girls joined in these dances, the star dancing being staged at regular intervals.

An hour or so afterwards, the women and girls retired, and reappeared in a half hour, with trays, containing the most delicate little cakes, ripe figs, muskmelons, with honey, and ripe dates, on which was a white substance, that looked like a sauce.

The boys were simply bewildered at the spread. "What kind of a sauce is that?" asked Winfield. "It tastes like sweet butter."

"It is butter," said one of the Englishmen.

"I never saw butter perfectly white, like this."

"Oh, this is butter from buffalo cows," he replied.

While many of the women and girls had their faces unveiled, the most of them had on veils which exposed only the eyes and foreheads, the upper end of the veil being held by a cord which passed over the bridge of the nose, and was extended around the head above the ears. The veil was long enough to fall down to the feet.

"They are the Mohammedans," said Mr. Norton, as the boys eyed them curiously.

"Why is it that the women do not eat?" asked Winfield, as he observed the women standing back of the men, who were being bountifully supplied.

"They are not permitted to eat in presence of their husbands, or other men," said one of the Englishmen. "When the husband eats his wife must remain standing, and always be in readiness to wait on him. Furthermore, it is a disgrace for a man to be seen walking with a woman on the streets."

The boys were very tired but extremely happy when shown to their room that night. A sumptuous breakfast came the next morning without the trouble of ordering it, and long before they were ready to start the native boys had assembled. The Englishmen had told the people who their young friends were, and that they had come from the great country America and were traveling around the world.

Just before leaving, Winfield happened to draw out his compass, and the boys crowded around it, crying out "*manhu, manhu.*" One of the Englishmen, noticing the look of wonder on Winfield's face, said: "That word means 'what is it?'"

The other Englishman overheard the explanation, and added: "You have heard the word 'manna,' used in the Bible, the food that the Israelites found on the desert?"

"Yes."

"It is said that the word came from that source, for when they were wandering over the sandy plains, and were without food, they found that

the dew had left a white substance, and inquired 'what is it?' or 'manna.' "

"But that wasn't anywhere near here, was it?"

"The desert where the Israelites wandered in their travel of forty years is less than eight hundred miles west of this place," was the reply.

From Gada to Mohammarah is a distance of little more than fifty miles, this section being the most fertile in the entire empire of Persia. It is a portion of the country which has an abundance of all the good things of the earth, such as fruits and vegetables, and the dishes were prepared in a variety of odd ways, so unlike the food found elsewhere.

Fruit was obtained for the asking, and the immense variety, of which the boys partook, prevented them from enjoying the regular meal. The soil is a rich sandy loam, and much of the area near the Gulf and along the river, which they were approaching, is overflowed each year, similar to the inundations of the Nile. This added new fertilizing material to the soil, and melons, as well as other vegetables, were planted on this alluvial deposit, and required little if any cultivation.

While trudging along, Winfield said: "What a wonderful difference in the people we meet. In Japan, the people seem to be very much in earnest. They are not light-hearted, so it seems to me. In China the people are like downcast workmen, with long faces, as though their work was never done; in Siam, everything seems to be taken lightly, as

though they were having a jolly time; in Burma the women and the girls were having all the fun and the men did the work; but here all the people actually seem to dance about and are gay."

"That is a good observation. It is so in this part of the country, where nature has been kind to the people; but it is not so in northern Persia, nor is it true in those sections of the country where the plains are barren, and the hills devoid of vegetation, and where the people have to work hard to get enough to eat."

It is not at all surprising that people in the more civilized countries have superstitions, when all the eastern countries are inhabited by races which have these beliefs as the bases of all their motives and actions. An illustration of this is given which shows to what extent the natives of Persia are affected in this way.

In their jaunt, while the travelers were passing through a village, several dozens of the villagers were gathered around a man who was lying, or rather sprawling on the ground. There was no effort on the part of the people to relieve the sufferer, although it was apparent to Mr. Norton that it was a case of epilepsy, since the man's eyes were rolling around wildly, the muscles of the lower part of the face were moving the jaw from side to side. He was frothing at the mouth, and his lower limbs were agitated, so that he rolled about on the ground.

The paroxysms continued for five minutes and then gradually disappeared. In reply to Mr.

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Norton's questions the natives cried, "Jinnis, jinnis." After the man had been restored and sat up the crowd avoided him and the boys could not understand the cause of it until Mr. Norton explained the situation.

"This is one illustration of the effect of superstition, to which I referred some time ago. Did you hear the natives cry out *jinnis* as I questioned them? That had reference to one of the evil spirits, the others being *ghuls*, and *ifrīts*, which are the principal hobgoblins. The afflicted man had offended jinnis in this case, and any one touching him would have been attacked in a similar manner, hence they avoided him, as you saw."

"While we were in India the Professor, of whom we spoke, related many peculiar things about the superstitions of the people there, but it does seem to be much worse here," said Stanwood.

"Yes; it is worse here than in any other country, although it is bad enough everywhere in the East. For instance, the Mohammedan will not pray before an open fire, nor in a stable, and his very attitude is prescribed and he must not depart from it, as each has its own superstitious meaning.

"But these odd beliefs have a part in all the acts of their daily life. When a man buys a cow he throws an object, like a stick, on the ground and drives the cow across it. If she steps over it with the right foot it is good luck; if with the left foot, it is an ill omen. They watch the cat

every morning, and if it licks itself frequently it is a sign of rain. They consider it unlucky to give a child a spoon to play with."

"Really, I don't see how we can find much fault with them, for we have good and bad luck signs, too," said Winfield.

"Quite true," responded Mr. Norton. "There is an excuse for ignorant people to believe in them, but that is not true of educated people."

It was strange to see the variety of animals used in the fields passed. Oxen and buffalo were noticed most frequently, but donkeys and cows were also in evidence, and on two occasions camels were drawing the primitive plows across the fields.

"I wish you could tell us why it is that there are no fine houses in this country," said Winfield. "It seems to me that they have nothing but the mud houses, and each farm house has only one or two rooms. Some of these fellows ought to get rich off their lands."

"The farmers do not own the land in Persia. It is owned everywhere by the lords and counts, who rent it out to the people. They have no idea here what it means to own the soil; and it is not to be wondered at that the people do not care about putting up good buildings to benefit the landlords," answered Mr. Norton.

On the evening of the second day after leaving Gada, they approached Mohammerah, a town on the Karun River, to which place their suitcase had been shipped. Here again numbers of cam-

els were noticed going in both directions, and all laden. On the river were hundreds of boats transporting petroleum from the oil regions, a hundred miles above.

"These are the express carriers, and trains for moving freight throughout the country," said Mr. Norton.

"I see that there are quite a number of horses here," said Stanwood.

"Yes; but only the wealthy and the titled classes travel in that way. The poorer people are compelled to travel on the camels, and that is comparatively cheap. Horses are very costly and are also considered too high class an animal for a poor man to ride."

A wall surrounded the town, and this they found was usually the case with places of any importance, as it had afforded a means of defense in olden times. The wall was irregular in its outline, built up of stone, and its mean height was about eight feet. In many places it was four feet thick. They entered the gate on the eastern side, where they were accosted by several officials, who quickly allowed them to pass after an inspection.

Within the town was a scene of animation, as it happened to be one of the Mohammedan feast days, when every one turns out. Before reaching the center of the town at least half a dozen different processions of young people marched by, some of them singing, and all headed by bands which dispensed lively music. All processions had camels in the train, loaded with human

freight, which generally brought up the rear. Near the center of the town was a mosque, where the ceremonies of the day were held and from which the people were returning on their way to the surrounding country.

The boys stopped before an unusual sight, a closed sedan chair carried on two poles which was borne by two horses, instead of men, as in China. "That is called a Tektaravan, and it is a high class means of transporting ladies. You will find many of them in the town," remarked Mr. Norton.

"There is still another way of carrying the women," said Winfield, as he pointed to a couple of cages, or boxes mounted on the opposite sides of a horse.

"Yes; that is for the middle classes only. It is called the Kaguva. The low class dare not ride in that, and the high class consider themselves too far above this mode of conveyance to enter it."

Dancing was taking place in the open space adjoining the hotel, where accommodations were found. The women were out in force, all with the veils over the lower parts of their faces, and men were quickly found as partners.

"In these dances you will see a curious thing," said Mr. Norton.

"What is that?" asked Stanwood.

"You will notice that no high-class men are dancing, and that there is a line of low-class fellows lined up and passing through the rear entrance."

"Yes."

"High-class gentlemen do not dance in Persia. They employ men to dance for them. You will see the man with an official costume handing coins to the men as the line moves along. Now notice the one who has been paid; he goes over to the group and is assigned a partner."

"Why don't they dance?" asked Stanwood.

"I told you a short time ago that it would be a reproach for a man to walk along the street with a woman. The dance is a public affair, and a gentleman must not be seen dancing with a woman in public. He can do so in his own home, but not where profane eyes can see him."

The next morning they had a consultation in respect to the route across the desert. Mr. Norton suggested that it might be well to ascend the Euphrates, to a point near Babylon, at a place called Divanich, or start from Bussorah, fifty miles to the north, at either place of which they could connect with a caravan route that would take them across the Syrian desert.

In this town the boys had the only opportunity of seeing a school in full operation, conducted under the Persian plan. The pupils were seated on the ground without any mats or other conveniences of that kind. The floor was beaten hard and smooth, and each pupil had some space in front of him so that it might be used as a place to write upon or to perform his examples.

A colored crayon or chalk was used for writing, and the figures or the examples would be written

down as dictated by the teachers. The same plan of imparting instruction was followed as is customary in most Eastern countries,—that of having recitations in unison, and also of compelling the children to commit to memory pages of matter on particular subjects.

This school had sets of rules posted up on the walls and during the first intermission the teacher and Mr. Norton, at the request of the boys, translated the principal rules, some of which are here given, which read as follows:

1. Every boy must wash his face twice each day, and salute his parents before leaving home.
2. Must wash his feet and legs up to his knees at least once each week.
3. Must always leave shoes in the hall on entering the schoolroom.
4. Must not speak in school or call nicknames.
5. No one is allowed to drink water "by" the pitcher.
6. Must not bake nuts or raisins on the stove.
7. Must salute all old people on the street whether he knows them or not.
8. If the rules are obeyed pupils will receive reward at the end of the term.

The boys read over the rules and smiled at some of the provisions. "I don't see what the fifth rule means," said Winfield, as he glanced to the corner of the room where a large pitcher was standing.

"I can explain that by saying that the pupils must not put the mouth against the pitcher, but

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use the small green leaves, which are made in the shape of little troughs, held in the mouth, and into which the water is poured," said Mr. Norton.

"I remember they had a custom of that kind in Siam," said Stanwood.

"So they call nicknames over here, too, do they?" asked Winfield. "I wonder if that is a practice everywhere?"

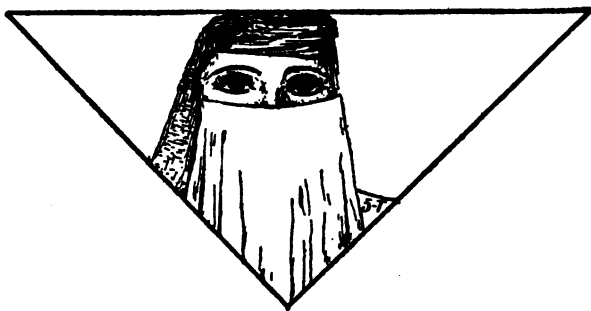
"Now that you refer to it, I want to say that several years ago I was in the most remote part of Nubia, where the people are about as primitive as anywhere in the world, and there I saw a fight between a lot of children, brought about by one little urchin who had a habit of going all over the village and calling children nicknames," remarked Mr. Norton.

The boys laughed at this and Stanwood remarked: "It does seem singular that every crowd of boys has some fellows in it with nicknames that stick to them all their lives."

"That was just what caused the trouble in the Nubian town. Whenever a name or a term of derision is given to an individual there it always sticks and they can never get rid of it. That is what hurts them more than anything else. Usually a name will come to a boy on account of some accident or particular happening, but in the case just referred to the little chap had a knack of bestowing some impish name and it caused a lot of trouble. But there is a particular reason why it is made one of the important rules of the school here."

“Why so?”

“Because it is believed in this country that a name bestowed by any one in anger acts as a curse, and that the hobgoblins and evil spirits are always present when the name is given so as to see that the curse is fulfilled. Thus, if a boy calls another a fool, the jinnis will see to it that he becomes a fool; if he calls another a hog, it will not be long before the fellow actually becomes one, and so on,” and Mr. Norton laughed as the boys accepted these statements with a great deal of doubt.





CHAPTER VI

ON THE SITE OF THE GARDEN OF EDEN

THE day following their arrival at Moham-merah they had a consultation as to the route to be followed. Mr. Norton stated that his course would be to Bagdad, and regretted that he should have to leave them somewhere along the course of the river.

"But I am going to see you started off in good shape," he said. "They have curious little boats which go up the Euphrates, and we might take passage on one of them, unless we prefer walking part of the way."

"But the map shows that Bagdad is on the Tigris, and it will take you out of the way to go along the Euphrates," said Stanwood, tracing the course on the map.

"That is true, but the Tigris has a swift current, greater even than the Danube, in Europe, and it has no steamers. For that reason I suggest that we go up to the junction of the two

rivers and then tramp to Divanich, where I must leave you, after the arrangement is made for your transportation by the caravan route," remarked Mr. Norton.

"But how about our suitcase?" said Winfield.

"Ship that to Jerusalem. It will get there before you do. I suggest, however, that you take along a couple of light Persian blankets, which are made of a mixture of wool and silk. I will get the proper kind at the bazaar," and after a few other hints and instructions they visited the office of a transportation company in Mr. Norton's company and had the case reshipped.

Several boats were moored at the shore, of which Mr. Norton selected the one most suitable. This, he explained, would take them down the Karun to its junction with the Shatt-el-Arab and up that stream past Busra to the junction of the Tigris and Euphrates.

Shortly after noon the boat started on its voyage. The Shatt-el-Arab is a wide stream, the distance across at this point being fully eight hundred feet, but it is rather shallow. At certain seasons of the year the water is clear, but usually it is of a dark, muddy color, due to the contamination of the Tigris, which rises in the mountains of Persia and rushes down with considerable force. Women were noticed all along the shores washing clothes, as of old.

"We are now in Arabia," said Mr. Norton, "and to the north is the famous section called Mesopotamia, mentioned in the Bible."

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They neared the junction of the two rivers. The Tigris and the Shatt-el-Arab describe a straight course, but the Euphrates makes a junction at right angles, coming in from the west. On the northern shore of the Euphrates and close to the fork formed by the rivers is a small town called Kurna, and on the eastern bank of the Tigris is Mazera.

At this time Turkish troops were in force at these places, and also at Basra, under command of General Subr Bey, the Ali (Governor) of the District of Basra.

"Isn't it somewhere along this river that the Garden of Eden was supposed to be?" asked Stanwood.

"It was above the junction of the Euphrates and Tigris. Many historians have picked out the town of Kurna, at the junction, as the identical spot. That was one of the reasons I suggested that we tramp it northwardly from that point. Much of ancient history was made on these two streams. Babylon is on the Euphrates, and Nineveh on the Tigris. Originally these two rivers had separate channels to the Persian Gulf."

They reached the junction and the boat headed to the west along the Euphrates. At Medina, eight miles west, the journey on foot was inaugurated. On the south side of the river the country was about eight feet higher than the bed of the river. To the north was a flat plain as far as the eye could reach, and beautiful palm trees abounded everywhere.

The road was alongside the river, and close to it in many places, and little villages were found less than a mile apart, so they determined this was the most favorable route on which to learn the nature of the inhabitants. The sights were new and unlike those in Persia, although they were distant not over a hundred miles from the scenes of their wanderings in Persia.

Here it was a frequent thing to see women bathers, and the most curious sight was the odd boats on which they floated about, and in many instances used them for crossing the river. On examination it was found that the boat was made of a goat-skin, which had been sewn together so it could be inflated.

The boys laughed heartily as they saw a woman with a child on her head march down to the brink with one of these boats, toss it into the water and mount it. With the infant on her head and a bundle of clothing under one arm, she then paddled herself across with ease.

"Do you think you could hold yourself on that round thing and paddle yourself along?" inquired Mr. Norton.

"I think I could," replied Winfield.

"If you go along to that row of dugouts you might have an opportunity to try it," suggested Mr. Norton.

With an eye to adventure, and also spurred with the hope that it would be a good opportunity for a bath, the boys were soon at the place indicated, and there saw quite a collection of the goat-

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skin boats. "Hammam?" inquired the man in charge.

Mr. Norton indicated assent, and to their surprise a singular-looking bathing suit was furnished, the articles in question being merely a sack, or bag, with holes for the arms and legs, the open top of which had strings.

"How do you get into these things?" asked Stanwood, laughing and holding up his suit.

"Open the upper end and step into it, and then tie the strings around your neck."

When once adjusted it wasn't such a bad arrangement. But Mr. Norton, who also engaged in the sport, was thinking of the goat-skin bag and the man soon understood what was wanted. He rolled out three very serviceable-looking articles. The boys grasped theirs and, rushing to the edge of the river, leaped in.

Now began the fun. The bag, when inflated, is somewhat oval in shape, but irregularly formed, and as each contains about three cubic feet of air, which is equal to about 190 pounds of water, it will be seen that a boy weighing not more than 120 pounds will not drag it down into the water very far.

The moment either would be on top it seemed to slide from under him and sometimes the bag would shoot away and require some swimming before it could be recovered. Altogether, it was one of the most comical things in which the boys had participated since they began their journey.

The cost of the hour's frolic was six cents, and

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a few cents added made the attendant offer a very obsequious salaam, accompanied with the mumbling of his lips.

"That fellow seemed to be very grateful," said Stanwood.

"You would think so from the manner in which he acted. But the Arab is very deceitful and treacherous and cannot be depended upon unless he takes the oath of the desert," said Mr. Norton.

"What is that?" asked Winfield.

"Swearing by the beard," was the reply.

The boys laughed at the absurdity of this. "It is nevertheless true," he answered. "Did you never hear the expression 'By the beard of the Holy Prophet'?"

"It seems to me I have heard it several times, but never knew what it meant," said Winfield.

"Then it would be well to understand that. A beard with the Arabs is considered sacred. It is a symbol of human honor and truthfulness."

"That reminds me of something I saw on the boat yesterday," said Winfield. "Two men were talking to each other very earnestly, and one was constantly touching the other's beard. What did he do that for?"

Mr. Norton smiled as he replied: "They were having some dealings with each other, and the object of touching the beard was to remind the other fellow that God was watching him and that he must be honest."

"Well, I never saw any of these people talking

to each other but they were using their hands and making motions of some kind," said Stanwood.

"That observation is correct. It is characteristic of them. The custom originated with the Jews, who can be recognized, even at a distance, throughout all this country by the vigorous way in which they use their hands. The Mohammedan, for instance, points to the beard or strokes it, and the men who vow fealty to each other must touch the beard. The Bible speaks of this habit, as in the case of Abraham, who made his servant touch his thigh to make the oath taken by him sacred."

The area beyond the river was dotted all over with pools of water, showing swampy sections, with living green between them, the vegetation being principally long-bladed grass or flags, and many beautifully colored flowers were noticed, some of them of immense size.

In the spring of the year that entire country is flooded for more than fifty miles from the junction of the two great rivers. On the southern shore of the river, along which they were traveling, there was one continuous panorama of palm and date trees, some in bloom, while others bore fruit in different stages of perfection.

Vegetables were being planted, and, in some instances, dug up by the gardeners, while melons were always to be had for the asking.

The second village passed had a small mosque at which a service was in progress. The rite was in behalf of some saint who had lived in that

region and who had told the people that they must observe that day each year or the crops for the ensuing year would fail.

All the men of importance in the place were bearded. They were the Patriarchs, who could do no wrong, and they carried the sacred banners, also the holy vessels, and the people bowed to the ground as the procession passed.

This matter of bowing to the ground is not a simple nodding, but an actual prostration, which is performed by throwing the body forward so that it rests full length on the ground, with the face nestled on the earth until the signal is given to rise.

A few miles beyond this town the party met two individuals so different from the mass of inhabitants that had been previously passed that the boys called attention to them. Mr. Norton said:

"I should have been surprised if you had not taken notice of them. They are Kurds, the most villainous of all the people who inhabit Persia and Arabia."

"Where are they from?"

"They live to the north, most of them in Turkey. They are murderers from the tops of their heads to the soles of their feet. They have no respect for each other and have no hesitancy in murdering their nearest friends."

"It seems to me that they are not very good neighbors to have about. Do the people here trust them?"

"No, indeed; the people are constantly on the

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watch for them and the least act on their part that looks like treachery means their doom. Always give them a wide berth, unless you have plenty of protection at hand. I caution you thus because you may frequently meet them from this time on."

"So between the Arabs and the Kurds we may expect a lively time," said Winfield.

"While the Arabs are bad enough, there is one thing to be said in their favor, and that is if an oath of friendship is made they will regard it; but a Kurd does not understand or recognize such an obligation."

Frequently, on the way along the river, they met men who could speak or understand English, for many English pass through this section on trading missions, so that there were few towns or villages where the language could not be understood. Most of the innkeepers had a small stock of English words, acquired from their patrons. This was frequently of great service to the boys.

On the evening of the second day, after a conversation with a native, it was learned that it would be advisable to cross the river and ascend the Euphrates along its eastern shore. They did so and landed at a town called Arka.

The hotel was a very primitive affair, but everything was clean and comfortable. At the first meal they were served with a novel dish, called Kabobs, made up, as Mr. Norton explained, of minced meat, which had been grilled over char-

coal, and on which was sprinkled finely chopped onions and herbs.

Thus far every meal of which they had partaken in Persia and Turkey contained onions in some form or other. The coffee was exceedingly strong and taken without sugar or milk. The thin, flat cakes heretofore described were also in evidence, and sometimes were so hard that it was difficult to break them.

"These cakes are made once a month, which accounts for their hardness. Usually they soak them in water an hour or so before serving them," said Mr. Norton.

"I never saw women with such black, piercing eyes as they have here," said Winfield, as they were wandering through the town after the meal.

"The eyes are considered the attractive feature of the women, and it is for that reason their faces are covered so as to be entirely hidden. This gives the eye an added luster, so they say."

The following morning they were late in starting, and while passing a quaint building Mr. Norton stopped and remarked: "Here is one of their monasteries, where the children are being taught. Would you like to have a look in?"

As this had been one of the things in which they were interested, they stepped over the threshold and observed the interior at a distance. The teacher, with a long, flowing robe, noticed them, however, and made his way through the groups of children who were seated about.

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He spoke English fairly well and his first greeting was: "God be with you." Mr. Norton explained that his companions were American boys and would like to see how children were taught. The instructor seemed pleased with the compliment extended, and the smallest children were called upon to recite the alphabet, which was glibly done,—“Alef, bey, tey,” which means A, B, C, and so on.

“After this is learned we begin to teach them the Koran, so that they can repeat pages of it,” explained the teacher.

“The Koran is the Mohammedan Bible, isn’t it?” asked Winfield, in an undertone.

After a few exercises of this kind the pupils began to recite individually, each one having a different selection, and this was carried on with so much vigor and determination by each that the result may be imagined. It reminded the boys of the school scene in Siam, as this method of teaching is also in vogue in many places throughout the East.

During the succeeding two days they passed through at least a dozen villages, all strikingly similar, when they stopped at Basal, the last town of any importance before reaching Divanich, from which point Mr. Norton would leave them and they would start on the great overland trip through the Syrian Desert.

The village was gaily bedecked, which indicated some festival. It seems that these people live simply for the purpose of celebrating some event

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or taking part in rites that have been handed down to them from generation to generation.

After an early meal in which the visitors were surprised with stewed chicken and two entirely unknown vegetables, called barnuga and pillau, they were attracted by the crowds of people moving past the hotel. They followed and had the opportunity of witnessing the first Arabian dance.

Men and women all joined hands, forming a long string, which was first arranged into an immense spiral, so that the complete mass of dancers covered a large space, the leader being in the center. When the dance began the feet were slowly shuffled and the hands moved up and down rhythmically. As it continued the beats grew faster and faster and the steps were accelerated.

Then the men began to shout, the time was quickened and the bodies began to sway; the women started with low, shrill tones, which also increased in vigor, until the men and women were howling and shrieking like demons, every part of the body being in motion, and the more grotesque the better it pleased the onlookers.

When the dance was at its height the witnesses became affected with the same spirit and began to dance. The scene was so startling that the boys themselves could with difficulty restrain themselves.

The dancing ceased only when those who originally had taken part were entirely helpless, and many were found on the ground completely exhausted, so that relays of friends were necessary

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to pick them up and carry away the ones most exhausted.

At the end of two days' hard marching the last town was reached, and after a night's rest Mr. Norton regretfully announced that he must leave them during the day. The boys felt as though their dearest friend was about to depart. They had found his presence such an inspiration to them, his hearty laughter and cheering words always being in evidence whatever happened.

But he was of great assistance in other ways, as he had told them how to treat the natives. He had a quiet, determined air, and as fearlessness is always a strong factor with people among whom they were now traveling, he was accorded every respect.

"I must now have a good, long talk with you before we separate," he said after breakfast. "I have learned that there are two routes to Palestine, one which goes by way of El Djof and the other far to the north. The northern route is not safe, I fear, and it would be wise, therefore, to take the lower course. I have arranged for your transportation to Jerusalem, from which point you can easily go to Beirut by rail, and from that point to Constantinople, provided it is possible in these troublous times to reach that city."

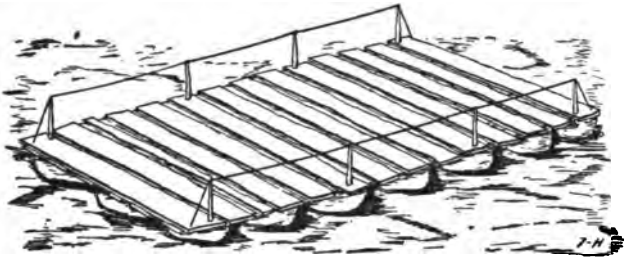
"We thank you for your kindness, but do not feel that we ought to accept it; but we are in such straits that we don't know what else to do," said Winfield.

"Exactly so; I do not consider it a burden in the

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least; and, by the way, when you are in Jerusalem you must call on the manager of the Oriental Branch Bank, who is a friend of mine, and he will be glad to give you valuable information, and I have prepared a letter which you will kindly hand him, in my behalf."





CHAPTER VII

THE ARABIAN SHEIK AND THE CARAVAN

THE boys were very much affected by the kindness shown. Mr. Norton handed Stanwood a sealed envelope, and the latter promised to see that it was delivered.

"Did you find out when the caravan starts?" asked Winfield, after the boys had expressed their thanks to Mr. Norton.

"Yes; one will start in the morning and another two days thereafter. The one starting tomorrow is not a large one, but I judge it will be to your advantage to take it."

"Do you think there is any one going who can talk English?" asked Stanwood.

"That I do not know. We might inspect the outfit this afternoon and probably learn what kind of company you will have," said Mr. Norton.

Shortly after the noon meal they crossed the river, which at this point was about 400 feet in width. The raft was made up of numerous inflated goat skins, on which were placed slabs of wood lengthwise and crosswise. It was piloted

across by a score of oarsmen, who held the flat blades in their hands and paddled vigorously to keep it headed up stream, for even the Euphrates has a current.

The boys were astounded at the sight that met their eyes at this point. In the various pens were over one thousand camels, and the most villainous lot of attendants that they had ever beheld. Winfield actually gloated as he looked at Stanwood, for ever since the latter's experience at the Panama Exposition in San Francisco, where he had charge of a camel, he had been anxiously awaiting the time when he could mount a camel on its native heath.

Winfield told Mr. Norton of the experience, and the latter laughed at it heartily. "I must see the manager and tell him about the remarkable knowledge you have of camels," he said laughingly.

The manager was found, and, to the delight of the boys, could speak English a little, although he was a native. During the course of the conversation he was informed of Stanwood's exploits in San Francisco and was very much amused at the recital.

"I now recall that we sent over some camels, and also several men who were to take charge of them; possibly the caravan sheik will know about that," and saying so he arose and invited his visitors to follow. He then approached a tall, quick-eyed man and addressed him in Arabic, the man meanwhile nodding and smiling.

When he came forward the manager said, in

English: "This is the young man who took care of the camels for some time at the exposition to which the camels were sent."

"Ah, God be with you," he said. "My son is there now, may God be with him," he muttered, as he cast his eyes upwardly and rolled them around.

"What did he do?" asked Winfield.

"He told them how to make the camels go," was the reply.

"Was his name Nashir?" asked Stanwood.

The old man opened his eyes and, springing forward, clutched Stanwood by the shoulder. "And do you know him?" he inquired eagerly.

"Yes; he told me how to make the camels go."

As Stanwood said this the old man put his arm about the boy, seized Stanwood's hand and pressed it on his beard. Mr. Norton walked up and seized the Sheik's hand and shook it heartily, while he turned to the boys and said: "You need have no fear; he will take good care of you."

The old man looked at Mr. Norton and then at the boys. He was not aware that they were booked for the journey across the desert and was gratified beyond measure when the Manager informed him that they had been assigned to his care.

"Allah bless thee!" was his comment, and as the boys were about to return they said: "We shall be here tomorrow early, and are glad that we can go with you."

The Sheik gave them a stony stare that frightened them for the moment, and turned his back to

them, uttering the word "Dakhilak." They were at a loss to account for this sudden change in his demeanor. Mr. Norton quickly stepped forward and suddenly turned with his back to the Sheik and uttered the words "Nesselan aleyk."

Having done this he motioned to the boys to follow him, and he marched away without once turning to look back until they were some distance away, when they cast back sly glances and saw the Sheik with his hands outstretched as if in blessing.

"That was the queerest thing I ever saw. Didn't he give me the oath of the desert?" asked Stanwood.

"Certainly."

"Then why did he act in that way?"

"That was the highest and most sacred way of bidding you good day."

"Well, what does it mean?"

"He said, 'God see you,' and I answered, 'Go in peace,' but the words must be said with the back turned."

It was an awful wrench to see Mr. Norton go. "I hope we shall soon see you again," said Winfield, while his voice actually trembled. Stanwood was also greatly affected over the breaking up of their little party. For the first time Mr. Norton's face grew sad, but that jovial spirit could not brook sorrow, even at a parting which was a grief to him, and he held out his hand, saying:

"I must and shall see you again. You will get letters from me from time to time, don't fear."

They walked over to the enclosure where the caravan for Bagdad was being made up, and remained with him until he mounted the camel, and watched the train as it threaded its way through the palm-bounded track that led to the Tigris River.

"That was a man and a friend," said Winfield as they mournfully marched back to the hotel. During the entire evening they sat and talked about him, and Stanwood took out the letter addressed to Avery Richardson, Manager Oriental Branch Bank, Jerusalem, Province of Beirut, Turkey, and looked at it with wondering eyes.

"I wonder what the Sheik's name is? I suppose we shall find out soon enough. Wasn't that a wonderful coincidence, to meet Nashir's father here?" said Stanwood.

The town had no further charms in the morning, and as soon as possible they took up the knapsacks and marched to the river. In due time the ferry-boat, or the goat-skin raft, was ready for the trip. On the way across fishermen were busy with their lines, and several large fish, which they called *bis*, were captured. They looked very much like pickerel, but with extraordinarily large heads.

"Let us see the Manager first and find out what the Sheik's name is, and also ask him how we shall address the fellow; you know Mr. Norton says that it is these little things which make a big hit with them," said Stanwood.

"Good idea," answered Winfield.

The Manager, who had no doubt been well informed concerning the boys by Mr. Norton, re-

ceived them with many expressions of pleasure. "We want to know the Sheik's name," said Winfield.

"El Muda," was the answer.

"But would you mind telling us how we must address him; we want to talk to him in the most respectful way. What must we say?"

The Manager laughed at the strange request, and after considering the matter for some moments, said: "Ah, I comprehend now. That will be entirely immaterial with Muda. Nothing you might say would offend him. Simply call him Muda."

"Thank you," said Stanwood. "What time will the caravan start?"

"Any time after noon. It might be well, however, for you to see to it that the things in the storehouse are taken out and loaded on your camel," said the Manager.

"The things?" inquired Winfield in astonishment. "We haven't anything to take along excepting what we have here with us."

"Then it might be well to make an investigation. I am sure I did not misunderstand Mr. Norton," he concluded.

The boys glanced at each other and quickly made their way to the stone building near the entrance of the large enclosure. "Are there any things here for us?" said Winfield to a tall, white-haired attendant, who was busily poring over account leaves which were scattered on a table before him.

"Yes; there are two bundles, which are to be taken to Sheik El Muda's caravan; but I think they are over there now," was the reply.

This was soon confirmed and the boys hurriedly rushed over to the long line of camels in the second enclosure. El Muda was there and greeted them with a smile in characteristic fashion, concluding with the words "Alhamd 'lillh," which seemed to be pronounced with a roll of the tongue.

He pointed to two packages which were then being affixed to the saddle gear of a kneeling camel. "That is the camel you are to have," he said. "May God be with you."

"Thank you," said Winfield.

"We may not be able to start before morning," said Muda. "The caravan from Bagdad has not arrived, and if it does not come in before the end of the second watch we cannot reload in time to start today."

"But I'd like to know what is in the packages," said Winfield, curiously watching the proceeding of adjusting them. "If they do not intend to go until, possibly, tomorrow, I wonder what they are loading up the camel for?"

Muda heard the remark and answered: "The important part of the handling of camels is to have the loads properly arranged and balanced. Shura is doing that work now so that when we are ready to start the camels are brought in and the men will know just how each load and part of the load is to be placed."

Tacked to the side of one of the boxes was an envelope addressed to the boys. This was torn off and handed to them. The envelope contained two keys, evidently intended for the boxes. They smiled as these were turned around to enable them to fit the keys.

Within the boxes was an array of fruit and other eatables, just such things as Mr. Norton knew would be needed and relished by the boys. One of the things was the pomegranate, that thirst-quencher used in all those countries and something that they had enjoyed beyond measure, for the water, even in most of the oases, is warm and does not satisfy the drinker.

"Well, if he hasn't included lemons in the lot," said Stanwood. "What a dandy fellow he is, to think of us in this way," and saying that, he took out one of them and handed another to Winfield. "If we had some sugar we could make lemonade; I think it would taste good, as we haven't had any since we left home."

Winfield cut a little hole in his lemon and squeezed out the juice. He tasted it and said with surprise: "This lemon seems to have sugar in it; well, that is queer."

They were trying the first of the well-known sweet lemons, which are regarded as such a refreshing fruit to the travelers over the plains. Neither sugar nor water is required, although they are usually consumed by using two lemons to a quart of water, but they are cut up fine and allowed to stand for an hour, and this permits the

water to extract the oil and the flavor from the rind, and makes a delicious, cooling drink.

From the kraal they wandered to the precinct of the straggling village, which bordered the camel enclosures. The houses were built among the tall palms, some of which look like giant fern trees. A mosque was sighted, for the people in Turkey are principally Mohammedans, and this was open, as are all of these structures.

Beyond the mosque was quite a town and a market quarter, called the *Sook*. While passing across the open space the boys saw a commotion and two men with peculiar dress rushing across and forcing their way into the crowd that had collected.

Curiosity prompted them to follow. The police were dragging along a man, while a white-haired and bearded individual was protesting. After taking him a few hundred feet the police permitted him to go, while the crowd jabbered and some shook their fists at the disappearing man.

This was a mystery to the boys until, quite by accident, they heard a few words spoken in English, which riveted their attention on a young man who was addressing another, both being so different in the color of their skin from those around them that the boys at once rightly took them for strangers.

"Pardon me, but I see that you understand English," said Winfield, addressing them.

Both smiled and held out their hands. One of them immediately replied: "Yes, indeed; we hap-

pen to be from Rangoon. We have just returned from Syria."

"We are glad to meet you, but would you mind telling us what is the trouble here?" said Stanwood.

"Nothing serious; one of the men was simply trying to make his dream come true."

The man said it with such a matter-of-fact air that it aroused Winfield's curiosity. "Trying to make his dream come true? Why should they arrest him for that?" he asked.

"Did you notice the man they arrested?" he asked.

"Yes."

"We were told he had a dream three nights ago in which he saw the old white-bearded man passing under a ladder, and the ladder fell down and killed him. He had seen the old man pass under the ladder every day, several times, and it refused to fall on him, so when he passed about fifteen minutes ago he was there and tried to push the ladder so as to make the dream come true."

The man said this without thinking it was anything unusual or deserving of criticism, but the boys were astounded. "Well, why did the police let the fellow go after they had arrested him?" asked Winfield.

"The old man pleaded for him and said that the fellow was only trying to make the dream come true and no one should blame him for that."

"I didn't know they believed in dreams in this country," said Stanwood.

"That is one of the things these people are noted for. They have many peculiar beliefs about dreams. One of the ideas is that every dream will in time come true, so you see, according to their belief that man was only anticipating the time when the old man would surely meet his fate in that way."

Passing along a row of houses on the way back to the kraal, they saw a sheep driven up to the door of a house and slaughtered, while the man standing at the head of the animal performed some kind of rite. This was the second time such a performance had taken place in their presence, but the first time did not create an impression on their minds.

Unfortunately, they were not near their newly-made friends, so could not get an explanation. However, on returning to the kraal Winfield asked Muda the meaning, and he gravely explained it as follows: "The sheep was killed as a sacrifice for the sick one in the house."

"Do you believe in that and think it helps them?" asked Stanwood.

"Oh, yes; the Holy Prophet bids us offer sacrifices, and my people have done so since the time of Abu-ramu."

"Who was Abu-ramu?" asked Stanwood.

"He is called Abraham in the Christian and Jewish Bibles. He is the one great man who is equally revered by Mohammedans, Jews and Christians. He was the first to offer up sacrifices for his people, because, you know, he was the founder of the Hebrew race."

"Did he live near here?" asked Winfield.

"Yes; this was the country he came from. The record in Babylon, not more than sixty verst (seventy-five miles) from this place, shows his name."

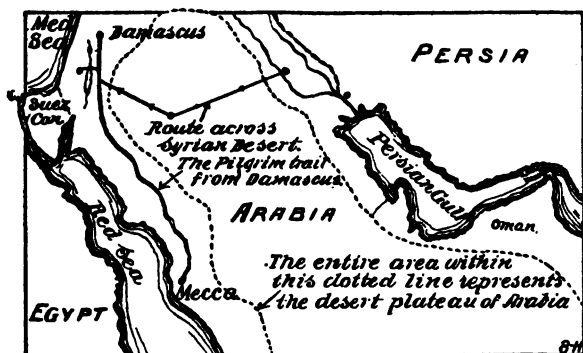
Babylon is directly north of the town of Divan-ich, and to the east of the place where they then stood was the supposed site of the Garden of Eden. In all that vast plain between the two rivers, the Euphrates and the Tigris, is a land which has greater fertility than any soil to be found in the world. Nevertheless, it is barren, excepting in a few spots, because much of it overflows in the spring.

On returning to the caravan grounds they noticed a commotion and saw people running toward the river along the main road.

After reaching the street and ascending the steps leading to an arched portico, Hans cried out:

"It is a Turkish ammunition train."





CHAPTER VIII

THE BEDOUINS AND NATIVES OF ARABIA

MUDA delighted the boys by telling them that it would not be necessary to return to the town across the river, as he had placed a room at their disposal. The village afforded them plenty of opportunity to get food, but at neither place was a picture show available.

In the meantime they wandered about among the camels and observed the habits of the keepers and the motley crowds that were noticed in every part of the great enclosure. Groups of curiously gowned men, with unkempt faces and straggling beards, sat around, motionless, staring on the ground before them and paying no heed to the people.

They soon learned that these were pilgrims, about to traverse the desert in order to reach the great pilgrim route from Damascus to Mecca. As that artery of travel will be described later on and

a vivid account given of the scenes along that highway, a brief reference only is given at this place.

It would be well for the reader to examine a map of Arabia, as it will give a more interesting idea of the route traveled. The country is shaped like an elephant's foot, the heel of which rests on the Gulf of Aden, which is the western extension of the Indian Ocean. The toe of the foot abuts the country called Oman, which is under British supervision.

The entire leg which extends upwardly from this foot is bounded by Palestine, which is located near the upper end of this leg. To the east is Mesopotamia, where the boys were about to start on their journey; and to the south the boundary is on the Persian Gulf.

It is bounded on its western side by the Red Sea and the Suez Canal. Near the southern end of the country is the city of Mecca, the capital of the country, about seventy-five miles from the Red Sea.

The entire interior of the country, 1,400 miles in extent, north and south, and over 500 miles in width in the central and northern portions, is high and dry, entirely devoid of rivers, and is from 3,000 to 4,000 feet above sea level. This great sandy plateau raises the finest camels and the swiftest horses in the world.

On this great interior plain are many places where water is found, and wherever it can be obtained the Arabs have built towns. But the in-

secure nature of the country arises from the peculiar habits of the people. The population exceeds 6,000,000, of which fully one-fourth are Bedouins, or dwellers in tents, and the remainder, the Fellahin, have fixed habitations of some kind.

The Fellahin, or peasants, till the soil, while the Bedouins breed cattle. The criminal classes, who are known as the wandering Arabs of the desert, those who disdain making their living by honest work, live in the out-of-the-way places, have the speediest horses, and are the terror of the owners of caravans, for they are merciless to all men and are swift and sure in their attacks.

The great distances which the officers of the law are compelled to go in order to find the criminals and the further fact that it would be unsafe to chase them unless in strong force makes the capture of these marauding bands a difficult matter. It is for this reason that all caravans are made up of a large number of men usually, all strongly armed, but even when so equipped many caravans have been entirely wiped out and the camels and goods seized.

It may thus be understood that the contemplated journey of the boys was through a region which is more dangerous than any other on the globe, and they soon learned of the nature of the undertaking by the precautions which were being taken during the preparations that were going on all about them.

When the camels were being lined up in the morning it conveyed the first idea of what it meant

to cross the desert in this form of conveyance. All the animals were on their knees, and three men attended to the loading of each camel. The utmost care was exercised by the loaders to have the weights on each side equal so there would be a perfect balance.

In many places the men had scales to weigh the packages, for it is well known that more trouble is caused by uneven loads than from any other source. If heavier on one side than the other, the hump will become chafed, and a camel in that condition soon becomes useless.

"How much will each camel carry?" asked Stanwood, as Muda approached.

"We try to give them a load of about 400 pounds. But that depends on the breed of the animal. There are two kinds, one called the Shawum and the other the Hugeen. The Shawum is the speediest, but this animal here, which is a full-breed Hugeen, will easily carry a hundred pounds more than the other," he answered.

"Is it so that they can go a week or more without water?" asked Winfield.

"Possibly they might, just as you or I might do without something to drink for that length of time, but the camel wouldn't be worth much at the end of that time. They can stand it three days, but beyond that it would be dangerous."

"Why is it that a camel can stand being without water so much longer than any other animal?"

"Because it has a special stomach to hold water. A camel has four independent stomachs."

"How much water does each camel take at a time?"

"That depends on the condition of the animal. We have some which will drink at least twenty gallons at a time."

"What do you feed them?"

"Crushed barley and dates, and also chopped straw and grain. Each one will eat about seventy-five pounds of feed a day."

It was past eight o'clock in the morning before the order was given to start. To describe one such scene would be sufficient, for each morning would see a repetition of the same event, with very little variation.

The boys were mounted on a dark gray animal, which slowly arose at the word of command. One after the other of the ones forming the caravan were led forward, each having a ring in its nose and a heavy thong attached, and the whole formed in line, the thong from the nose of one animal being fastened to the harness of the animal in front.

The animals carrying the freight had no riders, but every third or fourth animal had mounts and a small amount of personal baggage. Before the procession started Muda came along and examined every harness and tested the loads.

Accompanying the boys was a man with a long gray beard, with small eyes, a sharp, pointed nose, swarthy face, a turban of red and blue stripes, and a loose, flowing robe. When he reached the boys the old man bowed very low to Muda, and the lat-

ter returned the salutation. Then addressing the man, Muda said: "I have given you some companions who are friends of my son in America. Salute them."

"God be with you," said the man, as he turned to them and gravely bowed his head.

The boys quickly acknowledged the courtesy and thanked Muda for the pleasure of giving them a companion who could converse with them.

Without wasting a minute Stanwood commenced the conversation:

"It gives us much pleasure to know that you can talk in our language, but I did not understand from Muda what your name is."

"My friends will pardon me," quickly interrupted Muda. "This is the High Sheik Moujah."

"And my name is Stanwood; that is, Stanwood Bailey; and my friend's name is Winfield Merritt."

At the utterance of each name the Sheik raised his hands, as if in blessing, and uttered the words *Eusha Allah*.

"I hope you will pardon me," said Winfield, "but I am curious to know what *sheik* means?"

The response was painfully slow, but with an exactness and a precision that was very attractive: "It means old. It is said that it refers to a venerable old man, and it also applies to a head or chief of a tribe, or a religious chief among Mohammedans," was the answer.

But the caravan was now formed and about ready to start. Each camel carried a bell and

some of them several. There were bells of all possible sounds, pitches and timbres, most of them being fastened on the ends of small strips of steel or at the ends of spring wire coils, so that the least motion of the animal would cause the clapper to beat back and forth several times.

"What is the object of having all the camels carry bells?" asked Winfield. The question, while intended for Stanwood, was answered by the Sheik in that slow, precise way which characterized his former talk.

"Camels like bells, or almost any noise, and the young camels are particularly fond of the jangling and are always the noisy ones. Do you hear the shrill, plaintive cries? That is made by the young ones. If there are plenty of bells, they do not cry."

The scene attending the placing of the animals in line was exciting in the extreme. The jangle of the bells, the shrill cries of the camels, the hoarse commands of the drivers, accompanied at every order with an oath in their language, riveted the attention of the boys on the animated scene.

The camel which they rode was the tenth one in line. Behind them trailed forty-five other camels, and these were accompanied by over a hundred men. Muda rode a magnificent animal, noted for its speed. Before they had proceeded five miles, while stopping at a palm-covered retreat, there was a tumult among some of the drivers, and Muda was soon in the midst of the mêlée, striking right and left with a *boolah* which he carried, a

long, black, flexible club that made a wicked sound as it descended.

No one dared interfere with his authority; the fighters were soon scattered and driven to their own posts. "What was the matter?" asked Winfield.

"They have had a quarrel," said the Sheik, in a tone which indicated that it was a matter of no moment, and indeed they found this to be the case, for a feud once started is apt to continue during the entire trip.

A caravan will cover a distance of anywhere from twenty to thirty miles a day. At the close of the first day they were suddenly confronted by a wide sheet of water, along which the trail led toward the north.

"What is this, a lake?" remarked Winfield.

"This is the Bahri Nejef, or lake, which is seventy-five verst long. It has a *chai*, or river, which flows into the Persian Gulf. We must pass around this, and beyond lies the desert," said the Sheik.

The vegetation was still luxuriant, for this section was well watered, and indeed small rivulets flowed from the high plateau of the interior for more than a hundred miles farther along. Before it was dark they reached a watering place and the camels were led along until they formed a vast circle, within which the camp was formed.

As soon as the camels were all in a reclining position the men began the work of removing the burdens and this was accomplished in short order.

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The fires were soon lighted and the evening meal prepared by some of the men, while others erected tents, which were also formed in a circle, those occupied by the drivers being at the outer side, while Muda and the travelers were to occupy those on the inside of the circle.

The bane of this section of the country is the mosquitoes, which rendered life a burden, but the boys soon learned how to guard against them. Silken nets were provided, which were worn from the moment they alighted.

Once during the march the regular call for prayers was heard and all the faithful knelt, as was their custom, with their faces toward Mecca, but the caravan never stopped, and when through with their devotions, the men ran and caught up with their charges. The call for prayer came before the meal was served, and the Sheik as well as the others obeyed it.

The boys found the Sheik to be quite a philosopher. In his slow, quiet and even manner he was most entertaining, and while he spoke as though English was a difficult matter and required hesitation, there was never a stumble in a word. The right one seemed to be at hand whenever he had occasion to utter it.

Little by little they learned that he was educated in Adrianople, north of Constantinople, and was formerly connected with the Turkish Government as a translator, and could speak in German and French as well. He was a doctor of laws, which meant that his duty was to interpret the Moslem

laws, a position requiring a knowledge of the sciences and a general education to enable him to meet and answer all questions. He was unquestionably well qualified to speak in matters concerning the history of his people and of his faith.

The questions of the boys seemed to interest him greatly. He constantly asked questions about America, and particularly about the customs and the religious beliefs. Before the end of the first day they were all good friends and he anticipated many of the questions which were propounded.

After the evening meal he produced his tobacco bowl, which was mounted on a little stand and placed on the ground, while the flexible stem, fully four feet in length, extended over to the reclining cot on which he lay, while he conversed with the boys.

He showed the first signs of humor when Stanwood related his experiences at the Panama Exposition, when he had charge of a camel. His eyes shone and there was a half smile on his lips during the recital.

"Arabia is the birthplace of the camel," he said. "Your Bible is full of instances which go to show that from the earliest times the animal was known as the bearer of burdens."

"But is it true that they are vicious?" asked Stanwood.

"No, it is not so. The camel from time immemorial has been used to doing the work for man. It has no intelligence, such as is shown by the horse or the dog, for instance. It is usually

the most patient animal in existence, is not excited by the firing of guns or by undue noises, and if it does happen to get into a temper the fit soon passes away, and it is then as docile as ever."

"But I was told," said Winfield, "that they have been known to kill their keepers."

"That may be, but as an illustration to show their low degree of intelligence and how their anger is only a momentary thing, I recall where I once saw a case of sudden temper on the part of one in which the keeper threw a blanket at the animal. The camel, thinking it was the keeper, bit at it savagely and trampled it under foot, until its rage was appeased."

Three days' march from Divanich is an important stopping place, but excepting a few low sheds there is not a single permanent building in the place. It is the crossing place of a caravan track which runs from Bussorah, on the Persian Gulf, to northern Syria.

At this place many changes were effected in the loads of the camels, requiring a delay of more than a day. More than five thousand camels were in sight at this place, and as they have a very offensive odor, it may be imagined what the condition of the atmosphere was with such surroundings.

The camp was one seething mass of activity. Nevertheless, the boys enjoyed the novelty of moving around the men and observing the manner in which they performed their work. While thus wandering they heard a shout, "Hello, boys!"

They were at a loss to know where the sound

came from. "That was an American voice," said Stanwood. They glanced about and soon noticed a half dozen men and women in front of a tent. The boys rushed over the intervening space and grasped the outstretched hands. How good it felt to see home people again.

"Where are you from?" was the chorus that greeted them.

"New York," they answered in unison.

Inquiries developed that it was a party of Americans journeying to the Gulf. The boys were compelled to tell their stories and outline the course they had followed in the different countries. This was a day of joy and feasting, the first really jolly day that was spent by them in their wanderings, because it was so unexpected.

"We had some interesting and exciting times in the desert," said one of them, "and for two days we were in very dangerous surroundings. I am told that the route you are taking is very hazardous on account of the arming of so many of the people throughout Turkey."

"Did you come from Constantinople?" asked Winfield.

"Yes."

"Is it safe there?"

"The people are very much worked up over the war, and Turkey has entered the conflict on the side of Germany, but you will have no difficulty in getting there. The most dangerous part is over the desert," was the answer.

The spokesman of the party was Professor Cul-

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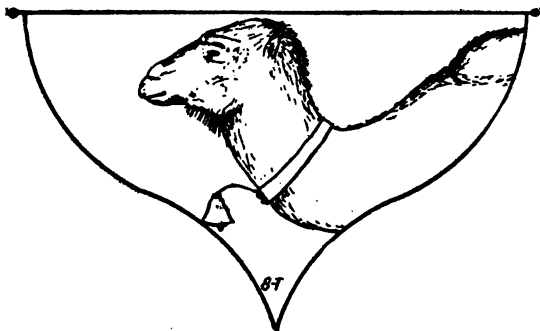
lough, who had made several trips previous to this, and was also interested in the explorations in Mesopotamia, which accounted for his familiarity with that portion of the country.

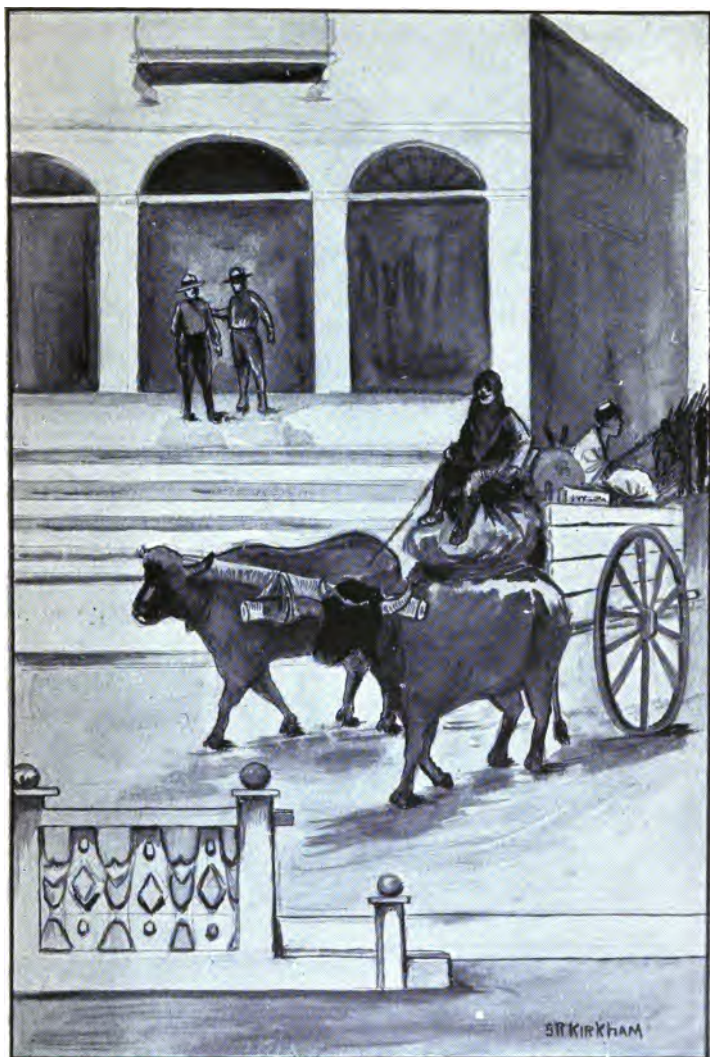
"This is the last stopping place of any importance until you reach Sekaka, over three hundred miles southwest of this place. If I recall the route correctly, there are only three watering places in the entire distance. I hope you are well provided with blankets," he said.

"Blankets? Do you think we shall need them?" asked Stanwood.

"While the days are excessively hot, the nights are sometimes intolerably cool, and you will be liable to catch colds. Take an extra pair of blankets, by all means."

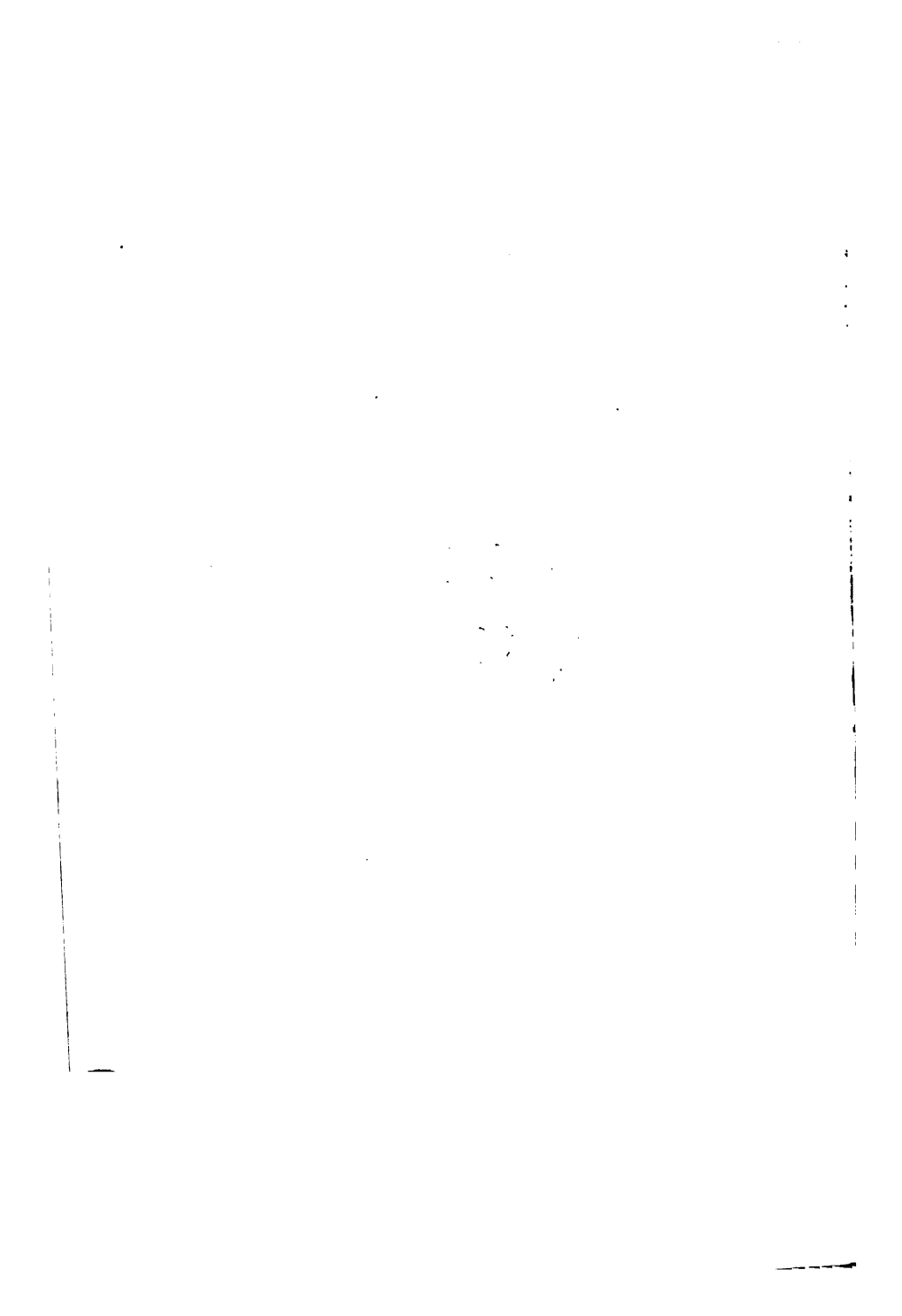
"I can't tell you how happy we are at meeting you," said Winfield.

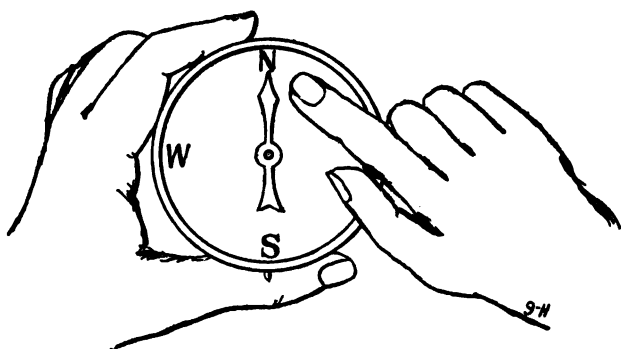




"That must be a Turkish ammunition train," said Stanwood.

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CHAPTER IX

THEFT OF WINFIELD'S PURSE, AND THE RESULTS.

BOTH caravans were to start in the early morning, the boys bound southwest and the American party to the southeast. It was hard to wrench themselves away, so they remained with the party until the last moment and stood outside of their tent while the procession was moving away, waving their hands in a final good-by.

A half hour afterwards they were on their own mount and told the Sheik about meeting some of their fellow countrymen and mentioned Professor Cullough's name. At this the old man exhibited considerable animation.

"How I regret that there was no opportunity to meet him. I knew him twenty years ago. Yes; it must be the same man. The Government granted him a firmin to conduct explorations at Nineveh, and that was in the province adjoining my own," and the Sheik seemed very much perturbed.

"I am very sorry," was all Stanwood could say.

Shortly after the caravan started Winfield began searching around his clothing. "What is the matter?" asked Stanwood.

"I have lost my compass," he said.

"It is probably misplaced," responded Stanwood.

"And I haven't any money either!" he cried, starting up.

"Robbed again!" said Stanwood.

"Fortunately, it wasn't much," he said, in response to the Sheik's inquiry. Nevertheless, it worried him. The thief had undoubtedly also stolen the compass. If the money had not been missing he would have supposed that the compass merely slipped from his pocket, and that would have been the end of it.

"It has been taken by some one in the caravan," said the Sheik. "Watch the Arabs. They are the thieves of the desert. This is a common occurrence. Every one expects it, and if you should announce a loss of that kind they would actually laugh at your seeming innocence. The better plan is to carefully watch every one in sight. The thief is usually the most incautious individual."

"I always thought he was the most careful," said Winfield.

"By no means, and for a very good reason," he replied.

"What is that reason?" asked Stanwood, very much interested in this new bit of philosophy.

"A thief, in the ardent desire to cover or hide

a crime, always resorts to some subterfuge. That ruse springs from an unnatural condition, and as a result the shrewd man is able to unravel a crime because of the mistakes made. The wily detective is he who can read the evidences which the thief drops here and there." This was said with the same deliberation which made his utterances so impressive.

In their immediate company the Sheik pointed out three Arabs. "In Arabia there are three different types of people," he remarked. "The *lost* Arabs, who are supposed to have dwelt here from prehistoric times; the *pure* Arabs, spoken of in the Bible of the Jews; and the *mixed* Arabs, who are the descendants of Ishmael."

"Who was Ishmael?" asked Winfield.

"He was the son of Abraham, and he with his mother, Hagar, was driven into the wilderness. That wilderness was Arabia. The wilderness spoken of in the Bible did not mean a forest, but a dreary place."

At the end of two days' traveling, with the sun pouring down its constant heat, the innumerable particles of sand, which seemed to be flying through the air and insinuating itself under the clothing, and the glare of the reflected light from the vast sea all about them, made traveling most uncomfortable.

But this was not the most disagreeable part, because the sun-shields readily protected the eyes, and fans were always convenient, and only a single thin garment could be worn in the hot hours

of the day; but the singular gait of the animals had to be acquired.

The first hour the body is being shifted constantly, so as to get a good riding posture; the first day the body commences to have a feeling of soreness, particularly in the region of the hips and back, and this seems to grow worse and worse for the succeeding two or three days, reaching its maximum about the fourth day.

The camel, in its ordinary walking gait, steps exactly the same as a horse does while trotting, and for most people it is uncomfortable to ride a trotting horse.

In the camel, moreover, there is a fore and aft pitching motion, which accompanies the swing, and it is this which makes the position on the animal so uncomfortable. The rider, at first, will try to counteract the swinging motion of the camel instead of relaxing the body and the exertion in doing so becomes uncomfortable and finally tiresome, until exhaustion sets in.

During the fourth day the boys frequently dismounted and trudged along, merely to limber up, and it was fun to swing up into position while marching along, for it must be understood that, as all the camels in line were hitched together, the stopping of one would mean the halt of the entire line.

When the first water hole or oasis was reached after the second day's march the boys were very glad of the opportunity to stretch themselves.

The tents were pitched, small, light structures, that were quickly put up and when taken down were folded into a small compass.

The usual order of camping was observed, the camels outside, forming a circle, with the heads pointed inwardly, then the drivers in tents, making a circle next to the camels, and the others within that double cordon. The boys had discarded their khaki suits, as they were entirely too heavy, and were now clad in the long flowing robes, with little silken caps, which gave them a distinct Arabian appearance, and they had considerable amusement viewing each other. But the costumes were sensible and comfortable, and served them well on the occasion to which we are now referring.

Stanwood was walking around within the cordon shortly after the evening meal and passed a group standing near one of the torches, when he was surprised to see three or four stooping over some object which one held in his hand.

A closer view revealed Winfield's compass. The man exhibiting it was one of their drivers. Assuring himself that he could not be mistaken in the identity of the man, he hurried to Winfield, and explained the nature of the discovery. "I suppose," said Stanwood, "we ought to tell the Sheik, or Muda."

After a little reflection, Winfield said: "No; suppose we charge him with it ourselves; that will be much better."

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"I have it," remarked Stanwood. "Tell him you had a dream; you know they are great believers in dreams."

Winfield laughed at the suggestion. "Just the thing," he answered. "You are sure it was the fellow with the scar?"

"I couldn't be mistaken."

"Then wait until we pass him, and I will appear to be startled at seeing him. Just let me alone in handling him," said Winfield, anxious for the fray.

The boys sallied forth, eager for their prey. The driver was still in the company of his associates. The boys walked along as though about to pass them, when Winfield glanced at the man and held up his hands, uttering a very forced shriek at the same time.

The man was startled, as may well be imagined. Winfield kept his eyes fixed on the man and repeated, while pointing toward him: "There he is! There he is!"

Those about did not, of course, understand what he said, but it had the effect of bringing about them quite a crowd of men, and among them Muda. The latter, seeing Winfield as the center of attraction, and hearing the words, came forward, and Stanwood explained the situation in a few words.

Muda smiled, and quickly advised the driver that Winfield had a dream in which he saw him pilfering the compass. At this announcement the man threw himself down, and when Winfield

went forward and raised him up, he fished down into his robe and drew out the compass.

Winfield took it and inquired for the money. Muda interpreted the request, but he denied the theft. Winfield looked at the compass and saw that its hand was turned toward the man. A sudden inspiration struck him. He slowly pointed to the finger of the compass. "It says you have it."

Muda was amused as well as surprised at this turn of affairs. The men surrounding the criminal were awed at this new instrument for detecting crime, as Muda explained it. They glanced at the tell-tale indicator which pointed to the driver, and the latter, pale with fright and trembling at the exposure, tore open the folds of his garment and exposed two packages of coins.

Winfield took them from the man's extended hand and deposited both in his pocket. Muda approached the criminal and without a word of explanation began to apply the moujah, which was kept up until the culprit pleaded for mercy. "That is the only thing they understand," he said as he marched away, after congratulating Winfield on the shrewdness of his experiment.

Within a half hour the whole affair was the sole topic of conversation, and shortly afterward a fellahin appeared and begged Winfield to discover the robber who had taken his earnings the night before. This was an embarrassing position, for if it failed to indicate the thief it would show that the compass, as a thief detector, was a fraud.

The Sheik was consulted. He appreciated the humor of the situation. "Go, by all means," he said. "I will accompany you. I know the intensely superstitious character of those fellows. I will tell them that you are going to find the thief."

The Sheik led the way and announced the loss of the poor fellahin's money, and in English suggested that Winfield should hold up the compass.

"See here," said Winfield, "I must get on the south side of those fellows." The Sheik understood. They gravely marched around the group and extended his hand to the north, toward the men. Before the Sheik had time to make further explanations, two men prostrated themselves, while Winfield slowly marched toward them and pointed at the face of the compass.

The amusing thing about it was that one of the men had stolen a purse from the Americans they met three days before. The other thief was the one who had taken the fellahin's money. The Sheik had a grave countenance as he looked at the two criminals. They were in terror, as any sort of punishment might now be meted out to them.

To their great relief, however, he pardoned them with a word of admonition, and with the boys marched back to their tent. On the way Winfield, now relieved from the tension of the experiences, drew out the two packages and, entering the tent, threw them out on the *aba*, or cloak, which was spread on the floor.

There were six gold coins and two dozen or more silver, as well as copper pieces, the whole

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amount being about seventy-five dollars. Winfield explained that the sum total of funds which he had lost was less than ten dollars, so that he had received the fruits of some other robberies or the criminal had given up the whole while in terror at the exposure.

"But what about the purse he gave you?" asked Stanwood.

"That's so; I wonder whose it is?" said Winfield as he drew it out and opened the clasp. Within were several English bank notes, amounting to one hundred pounds (equal to \$500), a draft for two hundred pounds, payable at a bank in Bombay, and several papers, while the inside flap had the name "Howard Ralston, Phil. Pa."

"Well, that was a good haul," said Stanwood, laughing at the result of their enterprise. "But what must we do with the excess money? That is the first thing to be decided. We can probably find a way to get Mr. Ralston's money to him."

The Sheik began to be companionable and smiled at the perplexity of the boys. "I suppose we shall have to fall back on you for advice," said Winfield. "It isn't right for me to keep the extra money."

He continued to smile, but remained silent. The boys glanced at him, wondering at the silence. After reflecting for some time, he said: "I suppose you want to return the money to the owner?"

"Yes," answered Winfield.

"Then it might be well to send for the driver."

"That is just the thing," said Stanwood.

The driver came in answer to the summons and entered the tent in a very dejected condition. The Sheik addressed him: "Is this your money?" he asked.

The man hung his head without replying, and the Sheik continued: "These young men have no desire to take what does not belong to them, and I have called you to ask whether this is your money."

Eventually it was ascertained that the man was a common thief, but since he could not return the money to the rightful owners, and as no complaint had been made by others on that trip, the funds were returned to him, amounting to about sixty-five dollars.

The purse presented another difficulty, however, but the Sheik quickly solved that by suggesting that it be mailed to the Bank in Bombay, with a history of its recovery. So Winfield immediately wrote a letter to Mr. Ralston, addressing it in care of the bank, stating how they had detected the thief.

"You should also endorse on the envelope that in case Mr. Ralston could not be reached the package should be returned to you, care of the Oriental Bank, Constantinople, and this will be a means of advising you whether or not the package was received by him." This advice was also followed.

A caravan of fifty-five camels makes a train about a quarter of a mile long, but there are many caravans over a mile in length. It is, therefore, frequently an easy matter for the robbers of the

desert, with their swift horses, to waylay and capture or cut out a dozen or more camels, laden with valuable goods, and get away before an effective resistance can be organized.

On the day following the incidents just referred to they met the first long train coming from the west. When the caravan made its first appearance there was a halt, and this in itself was an unusual matter. The Sheik aroused himself from a reverie and noticed the commotion and peering eyes.

"What do you think is the trouble?" asked Stanwood.

"Either a caravan or robbers," was the reply.

But the order was eventually given to advance, and soon the camels, with their swinging loads, came into view, whenever the clouds of sand permitted a view. Many places in the desert the sand is firm, but in other regions it is white and fine as flour, so that the least air will cause it to fly about when disturbed.

The great train, which was composed of over one hundred and fifty animals, marched on without halting, but Muda was soon in consultation with the Sheik who had charge of the train, and they were still talking when the last of the camels went by. The boys eagerly scanned the people on every camel in the hope that they might be able to recognize some of their fellow-countrymen, but if any were there they escaped notice.

After the evening meal Muda visited their tent and informed the boys and the Sheik that the

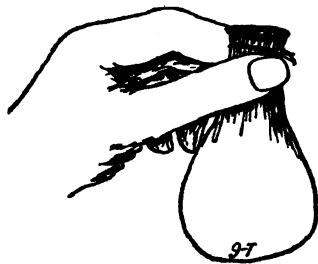
caravan which had passed recognized two robber bands to the north of the trail on the previous day and that it would be necessary to exercise the greatest caution.

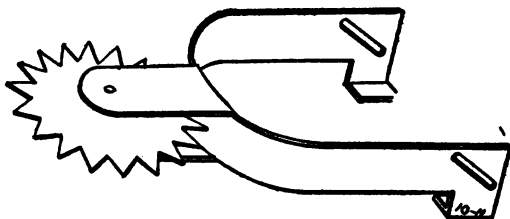
The first of the mishaps occurred on the next day. One of the largest animals developed a lameness and finally refused to move. The load was taken off and distributed among those which carried the diminishing supplies, and an hour afterwards another began to limp.

"What is the matter with them?" asked Stanwood.

"Rheumatism, I suppose," he said. "Camels are subject to a great many ills. There are more than a score of well-defined diseases which attack them, and sometimes an entire caravan will be affected by some contagious disease."

The best veterinary surgeons are constantly in service at the principal stopping places, and most of the caravans carry these professional men with them. Five of the freight carriers were attacked during the day, and they had still another day's march before the next well would be in sight.





CHAPTER X

CAPTURE OF THE BOYS BY ARABS

ONE calamity after another seemed to befall the caravan in the morning. Two more were rendered useless during the night, and it was now a problem to reach the nearest well, a full fifteen hours' march in a blazing sun.

Muda decided that the bulk of the caravan must go on, while he would remain with the disaffected animals and bring them up the following day. Accordingly, the small store of water carried was transferred to those remaining, while twenty of the swiftest animals, with the valuable freight and the most important passengers, were ordered to go on. The boys accompanied this advance party and very early the train was under way.

Long before noon suspicious parties were observed to the north, and Runau, who had charge of the caravan, showed a great deal of concern. He talked to the men energetically, and at the close of the conversation the Sheik said:

"I do not wish to alarm you, but the men have seen the Arabs all morning and we may have a

serious time until we pass through the dunes ahead of us."

"What do you mean by the dunes?" asked Winfield.

"They are small hills of sand which afford hiding places for the robbers. It is one of the favorite spots for the robbers, and great caution is necessary."

The camels were now swinging along at an increased gait, the speed being fully seven miles an hour. The first indication of trouble observed by the boys was a little cloud of dust to the right and almost dead ahead.

"That is not on our line of march," said the Sheik. "You see Runau is terribly excited, but his only safety lies in continuing the journey."

"Do you think he intends to fight them?" asked Stanwood.

"He does not want to fight unless it is absolutely necessary to defend his cargo; but he must not turn back and it would be folly to stop."

In another quarter of an hour well-mounted horsemen could plainly be seen in the distance. This was just the evidence the men in the caravan were looking for, for it enabled them to decide whether the strangers were friends or foes, as all the robbers of the desert are provided with the fleetest horses.

Every man in the caravan was armed and was now examining his gun. Runau had dismounted and was now in the advance, together with ten of

the most trustworthy guards. The horsemen retreated slowly, but the caravan did not slow down. Suddenly a half dozen rifle shots rang out from a small elevation to the left and one of the lead camels fell.

Instantly two men sprang to the front and cut the thongs which bound the animal to those nearest, and also disengaged the harness. Runau then gave a hurried command and turned with his men, firing in the direction of the dune where the robbers were in hiding.

The load was quickly transferred to three other animals and the march was resumed; the stop was of very short duration, not exceeding two minutes. They had barely time to become accustomed to their new place in the line, for they were now next to the lead animal, when a fusillade of bullets passed over them and the order was given to stop and dismount.

Others of the same band now appeared on the right side of their train and it was obvious that the robbers far outnumbered those in their party. The firing was very cautious now, on the part of the attackers. "They don't seem to be making much headway," said Winfield, after the first attack, although it must be admitted that both he and Stanwood were greatly disturbed over the threatened danger.

"They are cautious for fear of injuring the camels," said the Sheik.

"Why should they be so particular?"

"They are after the goods, and as they can't

carry them away without the animals, they want to save them."

"So they are actually trying to kill the men?" asked Stanwood.

"I suppose that is the only way in which they can succeed," said the old man, in that slow and stately tone and entirely devoid of any excitement or fear. It was the one thing which inspired confidence in the boys' minds.

More than thirty horsemen were now observed hovering around. Two of their own men were wounded, but the active condition of the Arabs made it a difficult matter to hit them. After an hour of skirmishing, the leader, evidently, for he was mounted on a magnificent horse, approached closely and waved a cloth.

He shouted to Runau that they had no desire to take life, but must have the goods, and if he refused they would make a charge and kill the entire party. There was a hurried consultation. It was manifestly impossible to put up a successful defense, and after a half hour of parleying certain camels were cut from the caravan and marched to one side.

The boys watched the proceedings as interested spectators only up to this point. Soon the bandits observed the boys standing behind their camel, which was on its knees, and they surrounded them in an instant. The Sheik made his way to the leader and protested in words which the boys could not understand, but it was evident the conversation pertained to them.

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Apparently his protests were unavailing, for he soon came over to the boys, accompanied by the chief and two men, and said:

"I am sorry to inform you, but you must go with these men."

The words of the old man paralyzed them for a moment. They inquired about the strange proceeding and were informed that, being foreigners, and particularly Americans, they were regarded as a rich prize. At their instance the Sheik told the robbers that they were poor boys, had no rich or influential friends, and were merely making a tour of the world.

This was explained, but it was plainly evident from the looks of derision on the Chief's face that it was an unbelievable tale. "He says that it is not possible that two young men can travel around the world without having plenty of money," said the Sheik. "You must mount the camel as they order."

The boys, trembling at this ominous order, took their places and the command was given for the camel to get up, after which it was marched to the side and lined up behind the train which carried the bulk of the goods.

Two hours before sunset the boys, on their camel, with twelve other animals belonging to the train, were carried away to the northwest, and in less than a half hour were out of sight of the remaining animals which formed their caravan.

"Well, of all the experiences this is the most interesting," said Stanwood, "but I never felt so

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uncomfortable in my life. What are they going to do with us?"

"Isn't he a villainous-looking fellow?" said Winfield, indicating the man who rode alongside.

In the excitement they had no opportunity before this time to take stock of their captors. Now they were free to make some observations. The Chief was a handsome man—that is, he was tall, had piercing black eyes, a villainously black beard, a peculiar turban, lined with red, and a silk robe that seemed to be wound around his person.

"Look at those big spurs," said Winfield.

The star wheels of these instruments must have been fully three inches in diameter, and the frame which held them was of silver. The horse was a perfect white, with immense shoulders and broad flanks. The tail was large and bushy, but not long, whereas the mane hung down fully two feet and was as thick as a mat.

If any of the men ever glanced at the occupants of their camel, the boys failed to recognize it. "What do you suppose they intend to do with us?" again asked Stanwood.

"I guess they intend to hold us for ransom," answered Winfield with a solemn countenance.

Notwithstanding the gravity of the situation Stanwood could hardly conceal his mirth, for the idea of being held for ransom, like real millionaires, was amusing. Winfield quickly looked up as the ridiculous aspect of the situation dawned on him, and he continued:

"I wonder how much they will get? Won't they be surprised?"

"What worries me most of all is to know how we are going to explain the situation to them, as I don't suppose the villains know how to talk English," said Stanwood.

"How I'd like to give that old scoundrel a piece of my mind. Here, you old scallawag," said Winfield, addressing the Chief, who was riding alongside, "where are you taking us to? I wish I could break your head, you villain."

The Chief paid no attention, and Stanwood took a hand. "You're a lot of thieves and cut-throats," he shrieked. "Well, if you don't understand, it does us a lot of good to tell you what we think of you," and both commenced to laugh at the idea of unburdening themselves at the expense of the thieves, even though they couldn't understand.

Darkness soon came, but not before Winfield had taken out the compass and called Stanwood's attention to the direction they were going. "They are taking us almost due west," he said.

"But of what use is the compass now? We won't have it very long after the robbers get through with us," responded Stanwood.

"Well, I don't care; it goes down in my boot. We may be able to save it," and Winfield found a place for it in the legging.

Darkness set in, and after traveling fully a half hour with nothing but the stars visible Stanwood

grasped Winfield's arm and whispered: "What is that dark object directly ahead?"

Winfield peered through the darkness. It was evident they were approaching something different from the sand hills, for there was an uneven sky line, the only unusual object on the horizon. As they neared the object several trees were observed and soon the outlines of several tents were visible, while the horses of the Arabs steered straight for a long, low trough and eagerly began drinking.

One of the men ordered the camel to kneel and the boys dismounted, while his companion led them to a tent beyond the trough. They soon discovered that this was a watering place, such as are found on the desert. Around the place was considerable vegetation and a dozen or more trees.

The camels taken from the caravan were watered and the booty removed, while horsemen arrived every few minutes. There was no special effort made to guard the boys and no apparent curiosity was shown concerning them for a full half hour, when one of the guards motioned them to follow him.

They were then led into a larger tent, where a dozen of the villains were engaged in a feast. Many of the things being consumed were undoubtedly those which had been taken in the recent marauding expedition.

A bountiful supply of food was provided and the captors were hungry enough to do justice to it, notwithstanding the depressed feelings which

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had now overtaken them. The only notice which the men took of them was an occasional scowl that made them feel decidedly uncomfortable.

"What a villainous-looking lot they are," said Winfield in an undertone. "I wonder where the Chief is?" and passing out, they saw him at work examining the goods which were being spread out and assorted by the aid of torches which were held on forked sticks.

Not knowing what to do, they found their way to the tent assigned them and sat down at the flap, watching the men at work. That occupied their attention for fully two hours, when the different articles were arranged and put into packages, after which they were carried into a tent.

The Chief disappeared, and the boys, tired of waiting, crept within the tent, while the torches were still burning, and by the light of which they could easily see the few rugs that decorated the sand, and, unrolling their blankets, were soon comfortably fixed for the night.

When morning came they awoke before the sun had arisen, the noise of the men outside being undoubtedly the cause of their early awakening. Without stopping for an invitation they marched out to the watering trough, bathed their faces and hands, and walked over to the tent which appeared to be the dining-room.

Coffee was offered them, as a matter of course, and in addition there was plenty of the hard, thin bread which is the staple in that country. A peculiar kind of preserve, something like a mar-

malade, was also offered, and several sweet lemons, the latter being particularly acceptable.

As these were served Winfield said: "So they have robbed our boxes; I see." It was particularly trying to see the thieves eating the nice things which Mr. Norton had so kindly donated.

After breakfast they wandered around the place, and on returning met the Chief near their tent. He came up in a very gracious manner and, addressing them in perfect English, said:

"This is very disagreeable to you, no doubt, but it is part of our business, and there are unpleasant things in all human affairs."

"What is your object in taking us?" asked Winfield, as he arose and showed his indignation.

He smiled and drew forth a cigarette from a silver case. This he delicately poised and drew forth a match safe. After taking out a match, lighting the cigarette and inhaling a few draughts he responded, in a very business-like way:

"It has been my fortune and delight to meet your countrymen before. They are very charming and understand the value of money. We are also engaged in making money, and although we do not acquire it with as much honor and credit as is the custom with many of your countrymen, still this is a very safe plan and involves us in very little risk, considering the amount of capital which we have invested."

He stopped and smiled after this neat little speech. Winfield looked annoyed and Stanwood

fidgeted about, his face growing redder every moment. The tone of the Chief, while very quiet, seemed insolent, and Stanwood could stand it no longer. "What have we to do with somebody else? This talk about our countrymen has nothing to do with taking us, and I want to know what you are aiming at?"

Winfield tried to restrain him, but he continued: "We haven't any money and you can't get a cent out of us, and there is nobody who will pay you a cent. You are nothing but a thief!" and he broke down in a fit of tears.

"You must excuse him," said Winfield. "I know he doesn't mean to say ugly things about you, but he told the truth about our traveling. We are two poor boys, who said we could travel around the world without any money, and a friend of ours took us up and dared us to do it, and now you've made a lot of trouble for us that will do you no good."

"Where are you from?" he asked.

"New York."

His eyes opened and a broad smile illuminated the dark features. "From that great city? Now I know there are plenty of rich men there who will ransom you. I am so glad to have this information. Probably you would like to communicate with the United States Consul? I can give you the address of several to whom you can send a communication."

"Yes; we want to do so," said Winfield, grasping at this opportunity with alacrity.

"Then, if you have no writing material, I will provide it."

"We have our own, thank you," was the reply.

"Then prepare a short note stating that you are detained, and I will see that it is promptly delivered."

"How long will it take?"

"Probably a month. That will depend on the Consul, of course."

He withdrew, and Winfield sat down to indite the letter. "What shall we say?" he asked.

"Tell him about the thief and ask him to make the Government release us," answered Stanwood, now somewhat composed.

The letter was short and to the point. A half hour later the Chief reappeared and Winfield handed him the letter, which had been enclosed in a sealed envelope. He took it and remarked, as he quietly slit the envelope: "This may need something additional, by way of reminder." After glancing over the contents he continued: "Very good; that will answer. Please add the following words."

Winfield took the letter and awaited the dictation: "The bearer returning the answer must indicate where the gold coin will be deposited, and unless the amount of ten thousand dollars is not provided within one month from date the Chief will not be responsible for the lives of the young men."

Winfield looked at the man as his face turned crimson and white. He trembled all over. "I

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won't do it. If you think you can get any money from them, go ahead," said Winfield.

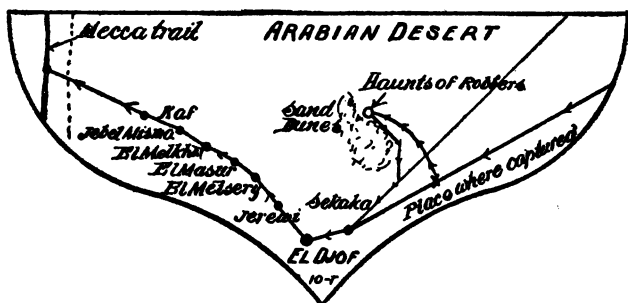
This attitude on Winfield's part caused Stanwood's eyes to flash. "You'll never get a dollar," he said vehemently.

"And that is your determination, is it?" said the Chief quietly.

"Yes," answered both without hesitation.

Without saying another word he reached over and took the letter and, placing it in his pocket, arose and passed out the door. Within a minute two men came in and began a search of their pockets. They were wearing the loose robes usually worn in these journeys, and the men motioned that they should be taken off.

This was done and the inspection was continued. When the shirt fronts were opened the talismans which the boys had purchased in Bangkok were revealed pendent from the ribbons. The men started back as though in alarm. The robes were hurriedly handed back and the men departed.





CHAPTER XI

THEIR MYSTERIOUS RELEASE

THE boys sat in their tent stupefied. So they were held for ransom? They were miles and miles away from the caravan trails, on the high plateau of Arabia, with only a vague idea of the direction they should take in case escape would be possible.

They discussed this phase of the matter at once. "We must go tonight, if it is possible to get away. The compass will help us out, because the map shows the route through the country, and I know the direction we took from the trail. Don't you remember I called your attention to it when we came along yesterday?" said Winfield.

"Yes; the map shows that the trail goes in a southwesterly direction, and if we go south we can surely hit it somewhere. For my part, I would rather trust myself to the desert than to stay with these cutthroats," responded Stanwood.

"Then it is understood that we will get out of

this place tonight. In the meantime we must try to get hold of some water and also something to eat," added Winfield.

A half hour after the foregoing conversation one of the searchers appeared at the tent and beckoned to them. In response they walked out of the tent and observed two camels, one provided with a saddle, while the other had nothing but the thong attached to its nose, the forward end of which was hitched to the saddle of the lead animal.

The two camels were the most sorry specimens the boys had ever observed up to that time. Both had the hair discolored in patches and appeared to be mangy. To the surprise of the boys, they were ordered to mount the head animal, and having done so, the Chief appeared and said:

"You must go directly to the southeast until midday and then turn south, and you may possibly find your friends."

The excitement was too intense to ask any questions. It seemed hardly possible that they were to be turned adrift without a word of explanation. They noticed the two boxes, which they thought had been rifled, lying in the saddle, unopened. They were stunned at this unexpected turn of affairs.

Without another word the attendant gave the camels the signal to move, and they started for the south on the slightest visible trail. They were quiet until the animals were quite a distance from the camp, for they were initiating a trip that in a measure appalled them.

"What was the cause for this sudden change on the part of the Chief?" said Winfield.

"That is something beyond me. I wonder if the talismans had anything to do with it? But what gets me is, why did they give us two camels?" asked Stanwood.

"Well, it looks to me as though both of them wouldn't make one decent animal. Look at them; they can hardly walk. How long will they last?" said Winfield.

"But this is better than staying in that old hole. I think I can manage these fellows. What an old bag of bones that beast is behind there." And Stanwood glanced back with a look of disgust.

"While we are about it we may as well see what they have put in the package." Winfield opened it and saw a quantity of food, also some of the sweet oranges as well as two small gourds of water.

"That was a little white, after all. Now, that Chief wasn't so bad even if he did try to scare us," he said.

As they traveled on the trail grew fainter and fainter, and two hours after starting they were going over a trackless desert with nothing to guide them but the blazing sun which shone ahead of them.

Winfield took out the compass and examined it. "Can you turn them a little to the left? We must go southeast, you know."

Stanwood began to feel proud at the knowledge

of camel driving which he possessed. During the five days' journey he had learned many additional kinks in the business, and these were also serviceable in the present emergency.

The animals, while probably beyond the limit where they could be of any service as freighters and incapable of traveling very fast, nevertheless made the situation more comfortable than if the travelers had committed themselves to the desert on foot, as they had contemplated doing earlier in the morning.

After four hours of this weary swinging on the back of the old creature Stanwood suggested that they ought to change their course. "I am curious to know why he directed us to go southeast and then take a southerly course?"

"It may be possible that the going is bad farther to the west. It looks as though the ground is higher west of us," said Winfield. "But we might as well change the course."

Stanwood soon had the animal headed in the proper direction and Winfield made it a point to keep the compass in service to indicate the proper course whenever the camel deviated from it, which it did constantly by turning to the left unless closely watched.

Another hour of this ceaseless swinging and the boys plainly saw the indications of hills to their right, which explained why the Chief had so explicitly laid down the course. From the northern border of Arabia and extending down into the

heart of the desert is a high ridge, over which the shifting sands are constantly changing the dunes that are ever forming.

The great caravan routes avoid that section, for the trail of a caravan would be obliterated in a single night. The appearance of the hills gave them the first gleam of hope that the Chief had not sent them adrift to perish on the wilds. But to the south nothing could be seen but a level, barren plain, absolutely devoid of the slightest landmark by which the course might be directed.

They ate luncheon in silence and the camels trudged on and on. The speed did not seem to diminish, but the old specimen behind frequently tugged at the thong and at intervals increased its pace. Why it was there grew to be more and more of a mystery as they passed on.

"It would feel good to let them stop a while," said Winfield, so the animals were brought to a halt. Stanwood stepped over the saddle and slipped down, and after doing so ordered the beast to kneel, the command being readily obeyed. The old fellow in the rear didn't have enough sense to take the hint, but stood there blinking until Stanwood gave the order to kneel.

The sand was so hot that their feet burned. "How is it possible for the camels to march along in the hot sand all day without feeling it?" said Winfield.

"The Sheik said that camels have thickly padded feet, which are spongy, and that prevents them from feeling the heat. He also said that

they have a big, thick cushion on their breasts that protects them from the heat when they are resting on the sand," answered Stanwood.

"What a good thing it was that you learned how to handle these fellows before we left San Francisco," said Winfield.

A half hour's rest was sufficient and after some difficulty the camels were driven from their knees and Stanwood crawled up and gave the command to march on.

The sun was now sinking very low and they watched it with a great deal of anxiety. What if night should come before they reached the trail or sighted the watering place on the route? While the sinking sun would assure them freedom from that broiling atmosphere, it would also compel them to stop for the night, and they dreaded such a contingency.

While thus moving along their camel suddenly changed its course to the right, and Stanwood tried, for an instant, to divert it to the left. He gave a shout: "Here is a trail! That must be the one we were trying to reach."

The camel refused to turn and followed along the beaten path, and the joy of the boys knew no bounds. They sang and cheered. The lunch basket was opened and the remainder of the food taken out. There was now no further need to direct the animal—the track was there and, stupid as the animal was, it knew enough to follow a path.

The sun seemed to drop behind the edge of the

scorched plains suddenly and darkness came without a warning, a thing which the boys had noticed particularly throughout Siam, Burma, and India. Even in the darkness the trail could be seen, because along that path the sand was discolored and not white like that of the surrounding area.

They went on for an hour after the sun disappeared and then were suddenly startled by the flicker of a faint light directly ahead. It disappeared and then again shone, as though moving from place to place.

"That must be on a caravan," said Winfield.

"Or it may be the watering place," said Stanwood.

Shortly after another light was noticed, and then another, and again the boys breathed freely. Within a half hour dark objects began to loom up; some trees outlined their branches against the sky, while familiar sounds began to reach their ears. They were so happy that coherent speech was difficult, for they were nearing the first great stopping place for caravans west of the eastern edge of the desert. Of this, however, they had no knowledge, but the sight of the camels and the torches assured them that they were safe again. It was their ardent hope that Muda's caravan had arrived in safety and had not gone on without them, and this they purposed ascertaining at once.

Their camels did not stop when they reached the kneeling lines of camels, but walked swiftly to the great troughs and drank their fill, while the boys slipped down from their perch and rushed

about to learn the identity of the caravan or caravans which were scattered about.

From a hurried observation they judged that there were fully five hundred camels under the trees, and the open space was full of busy men, all chattering. An Arab crossed their path and turned with a quick glance. Stanwood stopped and caught Winfield by the shoulder as he whispered: "There is the fellow who stole your purse."

"Hurrah! then our caravan is here," shouted Winfield.

The Arab was astounded. He gazed at them and, to the amusement of the boys, darted away like a frightened deer. "Let us follow. He is going to our encampment," said Stanwood.

"But what shall we do with the camels?" inquired Winfield.

"Never mind the camels; let's find our people first." Noting the direction that the Arab went, they followed, and soon stood face to face with Muda. His surprise was so astounding that he could barely utter a word. "Alhamd 'lillih; Alhamd 'lillih," he repeated over and over.

"How did you come here? Did you escape from Ibrahim?" he asked.

"No; he sent us here," said Winfield.

That was, unquestionably, as surprising a thing to him as it had been to the boys. It was hard for him to believe them. "But how did you come here?" he asked.

"By camel-back," said Stanwood. "Yes, *two*

camel-backs. And that's what I don't understand. One would have been enough, but he gave us two."

"That is easily explained," he answered with a smile. "One would not have brought you here. Camels must always have a companion on the march. But where are they?"

"They are drinking." No sooner had Winfield said this than Muda started for the trough. When he saw the animals he laughed heartily. "The villain gave you these in exchange for the high breed you were riding. But come, we must see the High Sheik; he has been grieving for you; we want to hear your story."

The Sheik greeted them in a very effusive manner and actually spoke twice as fast as the boys had ever heard him talk. He was all animation when Muda informed him of Ibrahim's actions.

"I do not understand it," said Muda.

Stanwood then related the story in detail and told about the letter which Winfield had written to the United States Consul, about their refusal to make a demand for money, and of the search and the discovery of the talismans which they carried.

"Ah," said the Sheik. "Let me see the talismans." The boys exhibited them. He held up his hands and said: "The blessed Koran."

It was then explained that the two talismans which the boys had were provided with inscriptions from the Koran and from the writings of Buddha. Notwithstanding Ibrahim and his followers were outcasts, they were strict believers in

Mohammed, and the verses quoted were the ones which visited imprecations on the heads of any who should injure the wearers.

"The man who sold them to us said they would ward off evil," said Stanwood.

"And they did, too," said Winfield.

The return of the boys was a seven days' wonder to the camp. After the experience which they had had with the thieves the circumstance was the more remarkable, and the ignorant drivers and the fellahin were almost ready to worship them, attributing their deliverance to the compass.

The oasis at which they had arrived was called Sekaka, distant about forty miles east of the principal oasis of El-Djof. During the evening they learned that all the sick camels had been replaced by the arrival of the second caravan the following day and that Muda had arrived at the oasis only two hours previously.

The robber Ibrahim was a well-known character, but this had been only his second raid within the past three months. The war, which had begun to spread over Turkey, so far as enlistments and conscriptions were concerned, created a state of unrest and the caravan travel was greatly increased, so that the robbers had more frequent opportunities to pounce down on these trains and get away without detection.

Sekaka is provided with the finest wells to be found on the desert plateau. Many palm trees were within the fertile area and some grass could be seen, as well as several permanent buildings.

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Two blacksmith shops were busy, and a few shops where articles of various kinds could be purchased.

As the caravan would not resume its march until the arrival of the second part of the train, which was expected some time early the following day, the boys had abundant opportunity to investigate the place. The town has about five hundred permanent residents and a small mosque was near the center of the tents, for the people do not seem to take kindly to houses.

What struck the boys as peculiar about the residents was their singular sallow complexion and their emaciated condition. Speaking of this to the Sheik later on, they were informed that the chief food of those people was dates, which, while very sustaining, are not at all fattening and give those who subsist upon them the appearance of being starved.

Several patches in which pumpkins were growing attracted the boys' attention. They are called *dibba* in Arabic. They are prepared by cutting them into little squares and boiling in fat or in palm oil. When oil was used the boys could relish the dish, but the fat variety was strong and disgusting.

At one side of the oasis and bordering the sandy plain was a burial ground, which was well tenanted. A row of spreading palm trees, closely planted, seemed to divide the dead from the living portion of the town.

The only thing that gave any life or color to the

scene was a plentiful supply of hollyhocks, all of which were blooming. These were in all colors and fully twice the size of the American variety. Long rows of sunflower plants were growing, but were not yet matured, and these, it was learned, were used for fuel, the stalks being large and hard and well adapted for that purpose. They grew out in the sand and never required any attention until ready to be gathered.

Before nine o'clock a scene was witnessed that gave them the globe-trotter's idea of the extent to which camel-raising is carried on in this high plateau. Over five thousand camels were being brought in to water from the breeding farms. This was done twice each week regularly, the distance traveled being in many instances from thirty to forty miles. While water was obtainable in many of the breeding farms, the amount consumed was so great as to make these trips necessary.

It should not be understood that the entire central portion of Arabia is a dry, sandy desert. In many places the water finds its way to the surface by means of artesian wells and flows out, covering a large area, which quickly becomes sodded, thus affording pasturage for large herds.

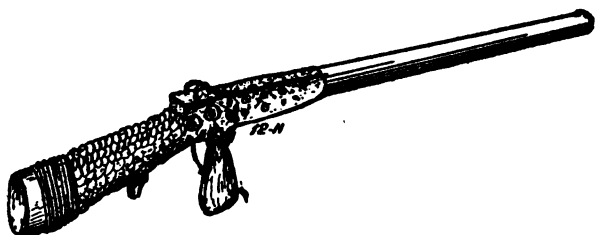
At certain seasons rains fall over portions of the desert, all of which contributes to the growth of vegetation. But the sight of five thousand camels is well worth going many miles to see. Most of those animals had never been used on the trails and were slick and glossy, for they thrive

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only when groomed, as is the case with the horse.

To handle such a herd requires an immense number of men, and the boys estimated that there were fully five hundred in attendance. It may well be imagined what a scene these men and animals afforded for the boys when they began to arrive and an opportunity was had to visit the shops.





CHAPTER XII

REJOINING THE CARAVAN. THE TALISMAN

THE boys and the old Sheik were again in the saddle together, and smiled as they saw the two old bones which had piloted them from the robbers' lair. "Good old fellows!" ejaculated Stanwood as he waved them adieu in passing.

"What a time we would have had if we had attempted to get away on foot, as we planned," said Winfield.

"So you had made up your minds to escape?" said the Sheik, smiling.

"Yes. Do you think it would have been safe?" asked Winfield.

"Well, boys with your determination would accomplish almost anything, but the trouble would have been with your feet. If properly clad, you could have stood the journey, with plenty of water and food."

"Why did he tell us to go southeast for four hours and then turn to the south?" asked Stanwood.

"If you had shaped a course directly southwest

you would have gone into the hills, which are difficult to traverse without a guide, and moreover you would have fallen into the hands of as rascally a set of fellows as you already had become acquainted with," was the answer.

Before noon they saw the great stopping place in the middle of the desert, El Djof, the high place. This is the meeting point for four great caravan routes and is the busiest place in the interior of Arabia. The town has a number of permanent buildings, all with single stories, and numerous stores which supply the denizens of the desert.

Before entering the town, the Sheik announced that he must leave them at that place, as his course would be due south from that point. This was a source of grief to them, because he had grown to be most companionable. Before parting he gave them a great deal of advice and requested that they should remain with him until the departure of either of the caravans.

They had been accustomed by this time to see large numbers of camels, but the scene here was far more animated than even at the last place, for there were over five thousand camels, besides those of the regular caravans, assembled at this place.

The palm trees were everywhere and it was gratifying to see the great stretches of green grass, as well as the patches of cultivated ground. Muda told them that they would remain here one

day. As the caravan going toward Teyma, which the Sheik would accompany, was not expected to start until morning, they felt under obligations to be with him as much as possible.

Together they walked through the town, visiting the stores and observing the people. On every hand were camels of every description and at one place the Sheik observed a group of them in an enclosure. "This is the hospital for sick and disabled animals," he explained.

"What is the most common sickness with them?" asked Winfield.

"Poison," was the answer.

"Do they poison them?" inquired Winfield.

"No; they poison themselves. They have very little sense in selecting their food. The green places abound in leghuna and gangoo, two shrubs which are very poisonous. Here is a row of the leghuna," he replied.

"Do you mean those with the red flowers?"

"Yes."

"Why, those are raised in New York. I have often seen them. We call them oleanders," replied Winfield.

During the course of the day, while passing a barbershop, they heard a cry, and looking within saw a man engaged in the operation of pulling teeth.

"Is the barber a dentist?" asked Winfield.

"Oh, yes; all barbers do that work," he replied.

Peering within, two men were seated awaiting

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their turn, while the man with the forceps seemed to be expert enough, judging by the expeditious manner in which he disposed of his victims.

"An amusing story of the man with the toothache is current in Persia, if you would like to hear it," said the Sheik.

"By all means," was the response.

"A man had in his employ a lazy fellow, who constantly complained of having the toothache, as the excuse for not going to work. In order to set an example, he employed a barber to extract the offending tooth. An examination proved that none of his teeth was decayed, but the man insisted that the barber was wrong and demanded that a tooth be pulled.

"The barber extracted a tooth, and found that it was the wrong one, and was told to try another, until, after a half dozen had been taken out, the lazy fellow confessed that it was merely a ruse."

"Served him right," said Stanwood.

Were it not for the extreme heat during the day, this would not be a bad place to live. It is unpleasant on account of the universal presence of the camel, but the claim is made that it is one of the healthiest spots in the whole country. Water is abundant, some of the wells being artesian, from which the water slowly bubbles out.

In the evening the Sheik handed the boys a curiously-inscribed parchment, saying: "This may be of use to you while passing through the last portion of your trip, before reaching the

Dead Sea, and particularly after leaving Kaf. Bear this in mind, and show it to the people whose favor you may crave."

They thanked him sincerely for the expression of good will, and assured him of their gratitude. "Ali will bless and preserve you," he said, as he turned to leave them for the night. The boys remained there in the moonlight, gazing over the sea of white sand, while a weary caravan passed them on the way to the watering troughs of the oasis.

The Sheik's caravan was well on its way to the south next morning before Muda announced that they were ready to start. The two boxes, with diminished contents, which Mr. Norton had provided, were loaded on the animals.

To their delight the globe trotters found an Englishman, already mounted, who was to be their companion. He greeted them, inquired their names and destination, and said: "I have been in some trepidation to know who my companions would be, as I had a sorry experience coming from Gobbeh, which is almost directly south of this. My companion was a questionable sort of native, who spoke an unknown tongue, so we merely sat and stared at each other for nearly a week."

"Well, we have had some exciting times ourselves," said Stanwood. "We have been robbed and held for ransom, and set adrift in the desert with two old camels; but it was interesting."

"Ah! so you too have been robbed? Well,

that seems to be the experience of all travelers here. That enterprise seems to be a pretty well organized industry in central Arabia. I was robbed twice; the first time I recovered the money, but the last time I was not so successful," and he explained the details of the two episodes.

"Yes, we were robbed, but found the thief, and he had to give up," said Winfield. The man laughed heartily at the recital of the part the compass took in the affair.

"Sorry I didn't use it to detect the thieves in our train. I shall remember that hereafter," he remarked, as he mused on the brilliant performance.

They were soon on their way over the last stretch of the journey, two hundred and fifty miles to the Mecca trail, which is thirty miles east of the Dead Sea, and forty-five miles from Jerusalem. The first stopping place was an oasis called El Jerawi, which they would reach late in the evening, as it was fully thirty-five miles distant.

It was too dark to get an idea of the nature of the place upon arriving, and after the evening meal they retired as soon as the sleeping quarters were arranged. The following day the start was much earlier, so as to enable them to reach El Meisery, over thirty-five miles beyond.

On the second day there was considerable commotion among the men, who claimed that the robbers were in force to the north, and every one was kept on a tension until El Maser hove in sight. Before three o'clock in the afternoon Muda an-

nounced that they would not resume the march until morning, so the boys wandered out, accompanied by Doctor Mellins, as their companion was known.

During the acquaintance thus acquired they learned that he was a member of a commission which was engaged in studying the plague epidemic and that he had also visited India the preceding year. During three years' travel in those countries he had acquired quite a fund of information and was full of interesting and amusing experiences which entertained the boys exceedingly.

"It is refreshing to be in the company of white people again and particularly so to be entertained with the account of their travels," he said, as they trudged along the hot and dusty streets of the oasis.

"But our experiences are not interesting like yours," said Stanwood.

"I disagree with you in that estimate. What you have seen and learned would make a book. But, after all, it is not what we learn but what we utilize that is of use to us." This remark was, of course, the key to his character. He was quite companionable, a man of forty odd years, straight as an arrow, rather slim in build, with smoothly shaved face and he constantly wore eye glasses.

He walked between the boys, with his arms on their shoulders, and kept up a constant chatter as the different objects attracted their attention. It must be said that the boys were singularly for-

tunate in the companions which chance had thrown in their way. What a variety of characters had they encountered as they trailed their way across the maps!

It was somewhat of a relief to sit down at a table other than the one provided by the cooks of the caravan, and in wandering about the Doctor remarked, after seeing a comfortable, clean-looking restaurant, that some refreshment be had. It was a welcome suggestion.

At various places along the trip milk was furnished, but only sour milk, or *leben*, as it is called, was obtainable. "I wish you would tell me why it is that they have so much sour milk here? I see they have it for sale everywhere, but this is the first time I have tasted sweet milk," said Winfield.

"They do not believe sweet milk is fit to drink. What we have here is camel's milk. I think we can get an idea of the way in which it is treated here. I will speak to the proprietor," said the Doctor.

After a moment's conversation the Doctor led the way, following the man to the rear of the establishment. On a low shelving, they saw a half dozen heavy stone jars, some of which contained sweet milk. The man made an explanation, and the Doctor interpreted the conversation.

"The three jars contain fresh milk, into two of which sour milk is put the moment it is brought in. This soon makes it sour, and they are then closed and served. This was the

custom as far back as Biblical times, when it was considered an honor to serve the kurded milk to visitors."

Returning from the restaurant they saw one of the numerous stores where weapons were sold. Here were found the matchlocks, still used throughout Arabia. This was an interesting exhibit. "What a singular gun," said Stanwood.

"Yes, indeed," said the Doctor. "You would be surprised to know how many of these weapons are still used here."

"But how are they fired?" asked Winfield. "There is no place for a cap and nothing to hit the cap with."

"The gun is fired with a match. Do you see that little pan, and the bag hanging below that is intended to hold the matches?"

"Is that why they are called matchlocks?"

"Yes; and that used to be the way the guns were made in England until the flintlock came into use."

"Those are peculiar swords. This is the first time I ever saw a sword that had the sharp edge on the inner side of the curve," remarked Stanwood.

"That is one of their well-known weapons. It is called the yataghan. You will notice that it has no guard for the handle, and only a knob at the end to prevent the hand from slipping off when in use. Most of the robbers and outlaws carry these swords and in their hands they are very effective."

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"What is that other kind; the one with a broad blade?" asked Winfield.

"I was about to direct your attention to it. They call it the Kandjar, and it means, literally, *handjar*. It is shaped like a leaf, is sharp on both edges, and has the heaviest part at the pointed end."

"How is it used?"

"It is really an old Roman weapon. It is hurled through the air at an enemy, and the heavy weighted end always keeps the point foremost. You can imagine what a wound such an instrument would make when thrown among a body of men. There have been battles in which the front lines of the Roman cohorts threw thousands of these weapons and by that means succeeded in checking a charge or starting the enemy into disastrous retreats."

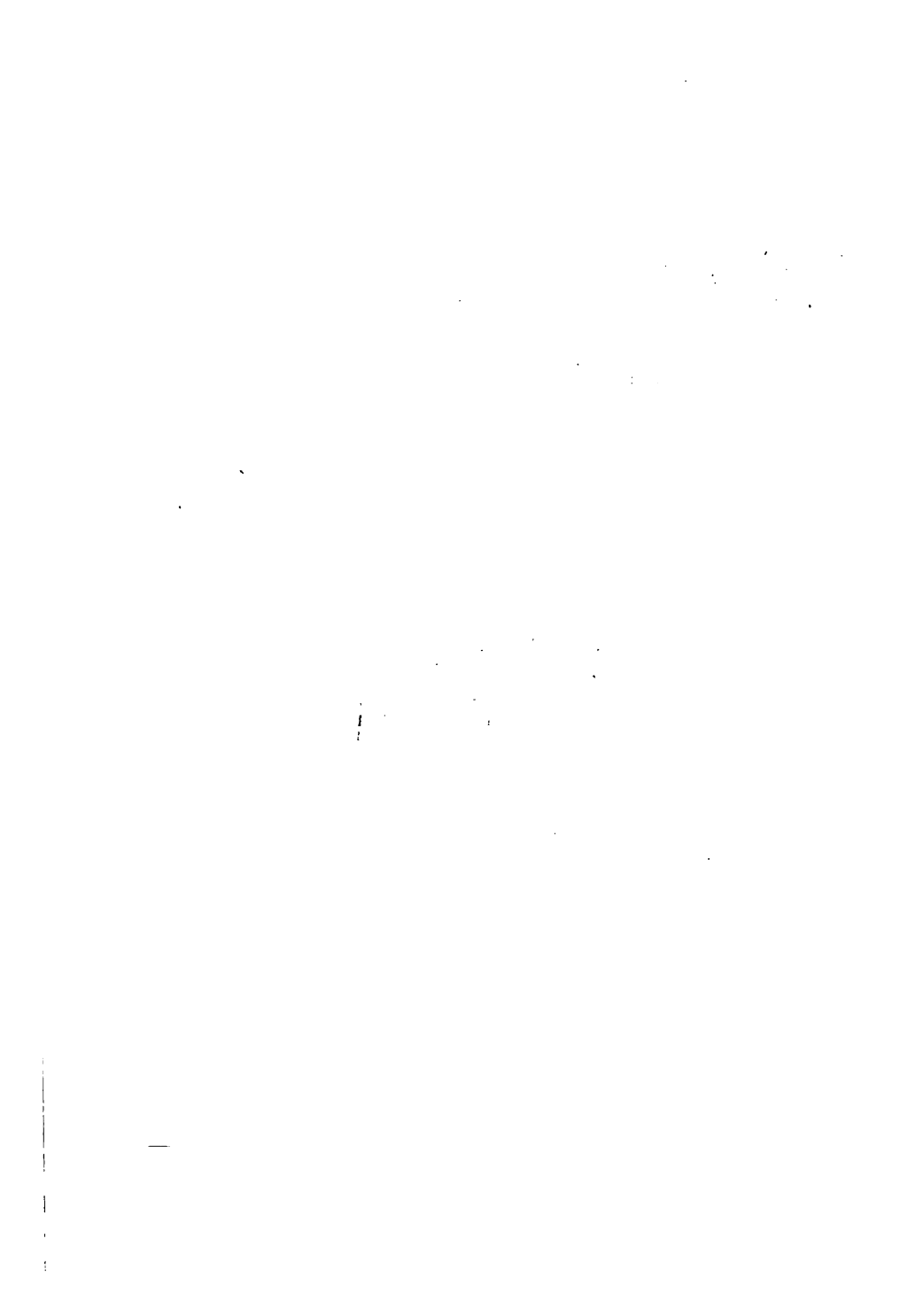
The kinds of knives, of all sorts and designed for every use, were also noted, many of them particularly valuable because they were blessed, and assured protection to the owners. Adjoining the store was a talisman-monger, as they are called throughout the country. Here were exhibited the little books, or locketts, with the Koran inscribed in them, and noticeable were rings each with a deep red stone in it. They were much more costly than any of the others.

"That is the cornelian, a stone which is held to be sacred by the Moslems. It is the chalcedony of the Scriptures. Notice that most of the rings



* * * a weary caravan passed * * * to the water
troughs of the oasis. * * *

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have the stone, or some small chippings of them," remarked the Doctor.

The following morning the train moved off promptly, reaching El Melkhat after noon. Without stopping the trail was struck and a halt for the night made ten miles from Etsra. From that point to Kaf was an easy journey, which was accomplished by three o'clock.

Muda announced that this would be the last oasis before reaching the great Mecca trail, the distance being eighty miles, and in order to make the point the caravan would be up and away one hour before one o'clock.

"It seems to me if they are in a hurry they would start before noon," said Stanwood.

"Muda said one hour before one o'clock, which means *sunrise*. That is the way Turkish time is measured," said the Doctor.

"What?" asked Stanwood in surprise.

"One o'clock is one hour after sunrise, and twelve o'clock is at sunset."

"Well, the sun comes up at different times during the year. Is it always one o'clock exactly an hour after sunrise?" remarked Winfield.

"Always. It is necessary to change the watch every morning, so as to get the proper starting time for setting the watch."

"What do they do in the summer time when the day is four or five hours longer than in the winter time?"

"That makes no difference. The period of

light is divided up into hours which, of course, are longer in summer than in winter, but a little thing like that doesn't seem to bother these people," answered the Doctor.

Kaf, the last oasis, is located at the extreme edge of the upland plateau and situated close by the bed of a Wady, which means the dry bed of a stream. At certain seasons this river is a raging torrent for an hour or two, and then the waters waste away by being soaked up in the thirsty sand. Sometimes, but not often, the rain will last long enough and the fall will be sufficiently copious to enable the bed to deliver some of its waters into the river Jordan a few miles below the Sea of Galilee.

Before starting on the last part of the trip the boys noticed that the men were carefully examining their weapons, and the Doctor said: "The last time I came through here we had a bitter fight, and several frights also, not more than thirty miles to the north of this place."

"What, robbers?" asked Winfield.

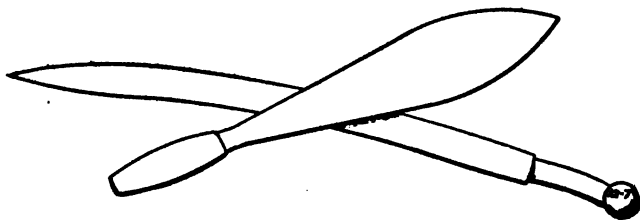
"Yes, and many of them all along the way. They may not be as plentiful now. That was two years ago. I judge they are making preparations for a possible encounter, judging from the care they are bestowing on the weapons."

At one o'clock promptly, Turkish time, the caravan was moving. A constant watch was exercised for signs of the Arabs to the north, but none was in sight; but there was a commotion near noon, and Muda stopped the caravan. The

animals were caused to kneel while luncheon was being prepared; meanwhile Muda was constantly observing the cloud indications to the north.

The Doctor's field glasses were eagerly used by the boys, and they had the doubtful satisfaction of seeing the riders of the desert, far away, undoubtedly the fellows who were lying in wait for a weak or unprotected train, and ready to pounce down at a moment's notice.

After resuming the march the same vigil was continued until it was too dark to use the glasses. After the corral was formed, this time much closer together, and the guards posted at close intervals, the boys retired to the tent and engaged in conversation with the Doctor until late in the night.





CHAPTER XIII

ATTACK ON THE CARAVAN

"It may surprise you to see how carelessly the camp is guarded," said the Doctor. "We had several frights on the journey, and the drivers declared we should be attacked and killed before morning, on several occasions. As a result they were given an additional amount of backsheesh to be vigilant, but every time we made an investigation they were all sound asleep."

"Suppose we go out quietly and see if our drivers are any better," said Stanwood.

As this afforded an opportunity for a lark, Winfield was ready, and it is sure the Doctor did not demur. After passing behind the tent they stole cautiously alongside the second one and reached the outer cordon.

"There is number one," said the Doctor in a whisper, as he pointed to a strapping fellow, seated, leaning against a tent, with the gun on the sand alongside.

The whole circle was made and not a single guard was awake. "I would have been surprised to find any one awake," said the Doctor. "And yet people wonder why it is that the robbers can make a successful sortie, and get—"

"What is that moving?" said Winfield, interrupting. "There is something moving, I am sure. Look out between these two camels."

An observation hurriedly made was sufficient to confirm Winfield's alarm. "Tell Muda, quickly," said the Doctor. Stanwood bounded off, while the Doctor rudely shook one of the would-be sentinels and pointed across the desert.

The guard, without stopping for orders, raised the lock and was about to fire, but was restrained by the Doctor. Muda appeared, and the Doctor pointed out the robbers. The situation of affairs was now apparent to the Sheik, and passing along the cordon he administered a succession of vigorous kicks that brought the guards up standing, while he pointed toward the Arabs across the sands.

Muda, with the Doctor and the boys, made the circle, carefully examining the sand field beyond. They were coming up from one side only, and it was the work of but a few moments until the main portion of the guards was massed at the place where the first observation was made.

The crack of a rifle behind them was the signal for a halt on the part of the robbers. The gun was discharged by some fool of a driver either by accident or design, but it was sufficient to warn

the Arabs that they were discovered, for, after dropping down, they soon disappeared before the garrison had time to give them a volley.

The stupid or criminal driver was sought out and on the order of Muda his shoes were removed, he was forcibly thrown on his back, and with the bare feet elevated, Muda administered a succession of stinging blows on the soles of the feet with a stave, or lath.

"That is the bastinado. It is a mode of punishment inflicted throughout Persia and Turkey for all sorts of offenses. The stave is principally used as the weapon of punishment," said the Doctor.

"Is that what all these fellows carry the staves for?" asked Stanwood, laughing.

"No," answered the Doctor. "The stave is one of the oldest weapons known in oriental countries. The Bible refers to it, as where Christ said: 'Thou comest with swords and staves.'"

Needless to say, the attack was not made that night, although but for the spirit of adventure on the part of the boys it is possible that the robbers would have made a haul. The best evidence was furnished as to the bold character of the villains when the caravan reached a small watering place the next day, where they caught up with another caravan which had resisted an attack the same night, made, presumably, by the identical band, the fight being so severe that two of the men belonging to the caravan were killed and several wounded, while four of the Arabs were killed and

others wounded, the latter of which were carried away by their friends.

Near the close of the second day a change was noted in the character of the country. Considerable vegetation appeared here and there, and twice desert palms were seen in the distance. Late at night the lights ahead indicated that they were nearing their destination. A chain of lights at irregular intervals stretched along the west, extending north and south.

"It is good to see that," said the Doctor.

"Yes, the lights make it feel as though we were nearing civilization again," said Stanwood.

"But I was referring to the string of lights. They are made by the pilgrims of the Great Mecca highway."

"Won't you tell us about that? We have heard so often about the Mecca trail. What is it for?" eagerly inquired Winfield.

"It would be a long story to tell about the custom of the Moslems and their pilgrimages. Mecca, the capital of Arabia, is the holy city of the Mohammedans, and was the birthplace of Mahomet. Every Moslem is bound once in his lifetime to make a pilgrimage to that place."

"What is the idea of the pilgrimage?" asked Stanwood.

"To perform the sacred rites which are only possible in that place and to kiss the black stone which is kept in a square tower or building called Kaaba, in the center of the Grand Mosque. The black stone is called *hajar al aswad*, supposed to

be originally a ruby, which came down from heaven, but it is now blackened by the sins of the people."

"Is that the reason why some people believe in lucky stones, and say that some stones are unlucky?" asked Stanwood.

"No; but the worship of certain stones is very ancient. If they were of peculiar form, or colors, the people in early times regarded them as of divine origin. Meteorites were supposed to descend from heaven. The Jews had many time-honored stones which are mentioned in the Old Testament. There is a celebrated one at the Temple of Delphi, and also at Cyprus, and I suppose you have heard of the Blarney stone in Ireland. Hundreds of instances of this kind might be given to show that the worship of stones was a very ancient rite, which Mahomet followed or copied."

"I have been much interested in the way the Moslem prays. They have so many motions. Sometimes they have only one motion, and at other times move their bodies in very peculiar ways. What is the meaning of it?" asked Stanwood.

"The manner in which they pray, as well as what they say and pray for, is all specified, and they must not depart from it. They are so strict that they must not even mispronounce a word, or the Creator will be offended. The positions of the one who prays are distinguished in five different ways; first, he must stand erect with hands

down at the sides; then he must raise his hands on either side of the face with the thumbs under the lobe of the ears, and with fingers extended."

"Yes, I have noticed that all do that whenever they pray," said Winfield.

"They cannot pray without doing that, for it means that in doing so they declare the goodness of God. The third requirement is that the worshiper must incline the body forward from the waist and place his hands on his knees, in token of submission; fourth, stand with the head inclined forward and hands on the side of the face; fifth, kneel with the hands flat on the thighs; and, sixth, prostrate himself so that the forehead touches the ground."

"We saw hundreds of them fall down in that way before a mosque in one of the towns in Arabia," said Stanwood.

Kulaut Balua is the name of the town on the Damascus-Mecca highway. It is overshadowed by Jebel er-Ram, the word Jebel meaning mountain, the top of which is 2,500 feet above the level of the Mediterranean Sea. Twenty-five miles west of this point is the Dead Sea, which is 1,300 feet below the level of the Mediterranean. The intervening mountains, however, prevent the Dead Sea from being seen at this point.

They were now within the sacred precincts of the Holy Land, and camped that night on the head water of the river Gad. During the entire night the tramp of horses was heard, and men coming and going, for it was the season for the

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pilgrims who were wending their way south, and the roads were also filled with those returning from their sacred duty.

The morning light showed a different scene from the ones they had been accustomed to in the weary march over the sands. Vegetation abounded everywhere, and trees were in sight, many in full bloom. Olive trees showed their dark green and a few vineyards were observed, while the date trees were in abundance, the roads being lined with them in many places.

Fields of grain were seen, the reapers being out in force. And everywhere were women, with bags, who were searching and picking up the individual heads of wheat, which they called *corn*.

"It is singular that the people have the same customs here that are spoken of in the Old and the New Testaments," said the Doctor. "Their habits have not changed in three thousand years. You see the poor people gleaning the fields, as carefully as in olden times."

While all these things interested the Globe Trotters, they had but little time to look around, as the caravan started early in order to reach Kahn es-Zeit, the terminal of the caravan route, and from which point it would be necessary for them to travel overland directly west, past the northern end of the Dead Sea, cross the river Jordan, near its mouth, and thence to Jerusalem.

The twenty miles of journeyings along the Mecca highway was the most remarkable trip they had made thus far. Mounted on the back of

a camel they were free to observe the wonderful array of humanity that struggled along, many of the pilgrims clad in the thinnest garments, dirty, unwashed, half starving, as it seemed, making an endless procession.

Nor were the other extremes missing. Men on magnificent horses and, to the surprise of the boys, even automobiles, carrying long bearded devotees seemed to claim the right of way. The motor cars did not have horns but bells. Bells, bells, everywhere, and for everything.

Looking back from one of the elevations over which the route wound its way could be seen, unless the cloud of dust prevented, one caravan after the other, with horsemen, and pedestrians, the sides of the highway clustered in many spots with those who had stopped for temporary rest.

Ahead was a scene much more inspiring. Peaks of towering mountains were observed and the Doctor, pointing to them, said: "Probably no place in the Holy Land is more often referred to than the localities of the mountains you see before you. That was the land of the Ammonites, the place where Lot's wife is said to have turned to salt, and where Joshua fought his battles."

"Do many people live there now?" asked Stanwood.

"No; singular as it may seem, it is now the most barren place in Palestine. Before the time of Christ it was a land flowing with 'milk and honey,' as the phrase goes, and was peopled by an immense number of inhabitants. The great tem-

ples among those mountains attest this fact, and that it must have been a region of great importance, but now only thieves and robbers are found there, the Ishmaels of the desert."

"What is the reason for that?"

"No one knows. There was a curse pronounced on the region and it seems to have been literally fulfilled."

Before dark that evening the last town on the highway for the caravan was reached. The boys were tired. It had been a long, wearisome trip, with little opportunity to do any walking and they missed that exercise.

"When we stop at this town I am in favor of tramping it to Jerusalem," said Winfield.

"Do you mean it?" said the Doctor, with some enthusiasm.

"Indeed, that is what we are aching to do," responded Stanwood.

"Then I am with you. That will be an adventure, sure enough," said the Doctor, as he nodded his head and smiled.

When the animals were housed within the enclosure at Khan es-Zeit the first to greet them was Muda. He came to see that their belongings were safely handed over, and to bid them good-by. "Have you found a place for the night?" he asked. "If not I can commend a friend of mine who will take care of you in my behalf," and he smiled at the Doctor.

"That was very thoughtful of you," said the

Doctor; "I know from what these young men have said, that your recommendation should be heeded."

"Then I will see to it that your boxes are taken over. See that broad stone front, with the two large lintels at the door. There you will find your servants," he remarked, as he turned and motioned to one of the men.

They were not slow in thanking him for his thoroughness, and immediately proceeded to the place indicated. The proprietor bowed very low and said: "Your servant awaits your commands, my lords."

"They do things up in grand style," observed Winfield after reaching their rooms.

"They still have the same way of greeting the guest that was customary in the days of Moses," said the Doctor.

At the first meal they were surprised to see their host sit down at the table with them. Two things were particularly noted, one was that he immediately seized a pinch of salt, and at the end of the meal the last food taken by him was a small portion of vinegar. That is the custom of the true Mussulmans.

At this meal were olives, in three forms, raw, pickled, and in the shape of a preserve. Olive oil only is used for cooking purposes. Dates, of course, formed part of the meal, and roasted lamb, the first time they had been served with it since they left Madras in India, and it tasted so

good that the boys spoke about it a dozen times that evening, and caused the Doctor several hearty laughs.

At the close of the meal, the last act was to hand around a package of toothpicks. After reaching their rooms the Doctor said: "You will observe that the old fellow was decorum itself, from the pinch of salt to the passing of the toothpicks."

The boys laughed at the Doctor's comment, and he continued: "The Moslem considers it proper to take and use a toothpick before his guests, because the Angel Gabriel, according to their belief, brought a toothpick from heaven for Mahomet at each meal."

The boxes came to their room, as Muda said they would, and as it would have been impossible to carry them along, it was thought wise to remove the fruit and eatables. Accordingly they were opened and everything removed. Near the bottom was an envelope which Stanwood espied in the box he was engaged in unpacking.

He quickly grasped it and tore the envelope. It was a note from Mr. Norton. It said: "The four pounds enclosed will help you over some of the rough places until you get to Jerusalem. From your friend, with best wishes. Norton."

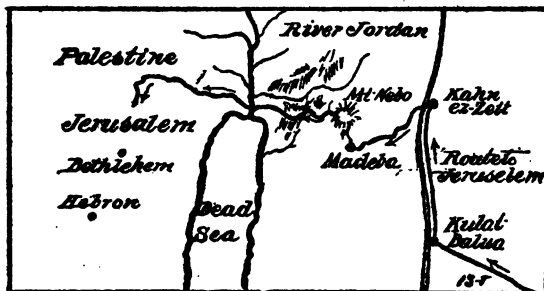
"I have an envelope here too," said Winfield, as Stanwood finished reading. It was of the same purport and contained an equal amount. It may be said that funds never came in more acceptably, for at that moment the boys had between them only about two dollars. It had not

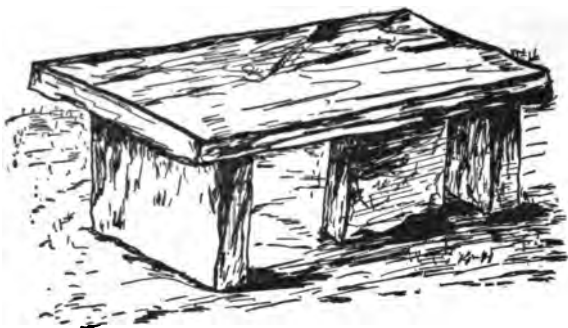
cost much on the desert trip, but both had been secretly worrying, before reaching Kahn es-Zeit, at the low state of funds and the fact is the proposal to make the journey on to Jerusalem on foot was largely prompted by the knowledge that it was the only way they could hope to make the trip.

"We must travel light," said the Doctor, "for there will be no trouble in getting food, except over about fifteen miles of the way. I propose we make the trip in a leisurely way, as that will give us an opportunity to see much more, and since you have considerable fruit we might take that along, distributing the loads among the three. There is nothing so invigorating as long walks and plenty of fruit. They seem to go together."

"Have you made up your mind which is the best course for us to take?" asked Stanwood.

"There is really only one route from this place and that is by way of Madeba."





CHAPTER XIV

IN THE LAND THAT MOSES TROD

THERE was no delay on the part of the boys in making preparation. All were too anxious to get away and the idea of tramping over historic ground, seeing the places made famous by the characters in the Bible and to witness the primitive conditions of the people, made them very eager.

During the first part of the journey, fields of grain and fruit trees were observed on all sides and the people busily engaged with different crops. Along the roadway, where many olive trees grew, they frequently came upon groups of men and women engaged in harvesting the olives. They were shaken from the trees and gathered in large tub-like containers.

These were the ripe fruit, most delicious when properly pickled, but the taste for ripe olives, even when well prepared, is an acquired one and it was difficult for the boys to accustom themselves to

them. They saw the natives, at different times before the present occasion, eating their lunches, which comprised nothing but the hard bread and ripe olives.

Figs were abundant everywhere, and these were always welcome. Flocks of sheep, and at several places herds of donkeys, seemed to be fat and well cared for. The sheep were in groups, and were tended by shepherds, dressed in picturesque garb, each having a stock, just as all pictures of shepherds represent them.

The necessity for shepherds was apparent, when it was understood that there were no fences in this region, and the nature of the country was such that it was an easy matter for the sheep to wander off and become lost. There were no great level plains here, but every part of the surface appeared broken up, the limestone formation being evident everywhere.

The road wound around hills, and along broken and precipitous walls, not high and imposing, for they were not yet in the roughest section; but the boys noticed many places where sheep could easily fall into crevices, or deep hollows, unless carefully guarded by the shepherd. The sacred writer in referring to the necessity of the shepherd guarding his flocks, and of the likelihood of animals falling into a pit, can be understood when an idea is once obtained of the exceeding roughness of the country.

Just as they were approaching one of the groups of olive gatherers, the latter all turned to

the south, and began to offer the prayer to Mahomet.

"At what times in the day do they have to pray?" asked Winfield.

"Five times during every twenty-four hours, at the following stated times: 1. In the morning before sunrise. 2. When noon is past. 3. In the afternoon before sunset. 4. After sunset. 5. After night comes on."

It was noticed that, following the regular gatherers, were women and boys, the latter of whom were working their way to the top branches and picking off the individual olives which still remained after the shakers were through.

"They are the gleaners of the olive trees, just the same as the gleaners in the wheat fields which we noticed several days ago," said the Doctor.

The party stopped for luncheon at the side of a gray broken wall. All along were small pockets cut out of the rock, and many of these were filled with water.

"Are these specially made in the rocks?" asked Stanwood.

"That is a custom throughout much of this country, particularly in sections where springs are few and not close by the roads. Some are very large and hold a barrel or more, and frequently they are natural formations which have, doubtless, furnished water to travelers for centuries."

The path grew more and more lonely, and the scenery wilder as they advanced. In the after-

noon they met two pilgrims making their way to the Mecca highway, who were resting by the roadside as the Doctor greeted them. The former inquired about the travel and asked if many of the faithful were on the way.

While thus conversing Winfield's quick eye noticed many peculiarly-arranged stones, in which were several uprights, and flat stones laid across those on top. He crawled up the slight incline to get a better view, and Stanwood followed.

"Ah," said the Doctor, "you have found a field of dolmens. That is the finest array I have seen."

"What are dolmens?" asked Winfield.

"They are stone altars, or supposed to be, although they may have been, originally, houses, or even tombs. We might take a look at them."

"Here is a big one," shouted Stanwood, as he came from behind a slight hill.

"Numbers of these may be found throughout France, and particularly in Brittany. One I know of that I am specially reminded of, which is fully sixty feet in length and several of the stones have holes bored through them."

"Have you any idea what that was done for?" asked Winfield.

"It is conjectured that the place was a tomb, and the hole was made so as to provide a means for feeding the dead," was the answer.

"Here are some without the top stones on," said Winfield.

"They are called the menhirs."

"But some of them are like millstones, and are all sitting up on their edges. That seems very queer," responded Stanwood.

"Yes; it is these curious things which cause men to investigate and try to penetrate the motives of the builders. The menhirs were cut out with some tool; but the dolmens are all made of simply the rough stones. These evidences of antiquity are found in hundreds of places in and near Palestine, and are particularly numerous on the plains of Moab, to the north of us. The menhirs are mentioned in the Old Testament, for they were built long before the Jews came to this country."

But the dolmens and menhirs were not the only curious things which were discovered in this region, as they advanced. Not far from the road were crude stone circles, and cairns, and the walls of rock showed deeply cleft places, like miniature caves.

One of these was examined. It was about twelve feet deep, the entrance being about six feet in height, but the ceiling in the interior was fully two feet higher. On one side the wall was cut out to provide hollow places.

"These openings are called loculi," said the Doctor. "They were undoubtedly cut out to provide places for the coffins of the dead."

"And do you think this was a tomb?" asked Stanwood.

"Certainly. In olden times all the dead were buried in these rock-cut tombs."

"Was there any special reason for that?"

"Yes; two things contributed to this method of burial; one was that the limestone formation in this country makes it a land of caves, for such caverns are formed in the rock only in that kind of stone, and it was an easy matter to provide room for burial in these places. The other reason why all but the very poor adopted this mode of interment was because the wild animals would disinter the remains, if buried in the ordinary way."

Thus far the road led upwardly, and in the direction of Madeba, which was reached in the afternoon. The small town is located on the side of a mountain, the highest point of which could be seen, and was, probably, three miles distant.

"Do you see that high point, boys? That is Mount Nebo. It is about 2,600 feet above sea level. It is distinguished as the place where Moses died. It was from that point he viewed the Promised Land."

"How high are we above the level of the sea at this place?" asked Winfield.

"That point, to which I have referred is not more than eight hundred feet above us, so we are at an altitude of about 1800 feet," answered the Doctor.

"I would like to go up there," said Stanwood.

"So should I," added Winfield.

"That suits me; we can make the ascent and go down on the opposite side. The mountain is about eight miles from the Dead Sea."

"Then can we see the Dead Sea from that point?" eagerly inquired Stanwood.

"Yes; and the greater part of the Jordan Valley. Then it is understood that we are to take the route over the mountain?"

"By all means," was the answer in unison.

All the houses in Madeba are built of stone. When taken out of the quarry it is soft, and easily worked, and as it is cheap, and crops out of the hills all about the town, it is the ideal material for building purposes. The great ruins scattered everywhere interested them. This was once a large and thriving city.

Quite a large mosque was located near the center of the town and a visit was made in the evening. At the side of the church was a sacred tree, which was literally covered with cast off clothing, of all kinds and colors, from dirty tattered leggings to the *aba*, or Arab cloak.

The Doctor watched the boys as they surveyed the unusual sight. "I am sure you want to know about that?" he said pointing to the tree. "It is a sacred tree."

"They have a funny way of treating it," said Stanwood.

"No; the poor, the sick, and the infirm have offered the tree some article of clothing, in the belief that by touching even the garment it will cure them, or bring them riches. It is part of the same belief that is common throughout this entire country, that there is virtue in the touch. The woman who touched the hem of Christ's garment;

the hand upon the beard; the kissing of the sacred stone, all indicate that there is efficacy in direct contact in some form."

The delay owing to this strange sight caused them to be impatient, so an early start was decided upon, for it was evident they would have a steep climb in many places. The ascent from the northerly side was not so abrupt, nor was it broken up into such great ravines; but they were determined to reach the summit, even though it should consume the greater part of the day.

The three miles required fully four hours, and as they were nearing the top a narrow trail led to the western side of the plateau of an acre or more which formed the summit. The whole western landscape came into view with startling suddenness, the impressive feature being, of course, the Red Sea, which looked like a piece of polished silver, 4,000 feet below them.

The boys were too much awed by the grandeur to ask any questions. We might describe, in part, what they saw from this point. The Dead Sea is forty-seven miles long, and from six to nine miles wide. At its deepest portion it is 1,600 feet, and as its surface is 1,300 feet below the level of the ocean, it will be seen that this valley is a rift in the earth, almost a half mile in depth.

The whole of the sea is visible from end to end. The river Jordan, which flows into its upper end, can also be seen in its tortuous windings, hidden here and there by the intervening hills, and sixty miles to the north can be seen a trace of the Sea

of Galilee, the surface of which is six hundred feet higher than that of the Dead Sea.

A fall of six inches in a mile will give a stream a rapid flow; but the Jordan has a fall of ten feet to the mile, and nothing but the extraordinary windings of the bed of the river prevents the Sea of Galilee from being drained dry.

There is no body of water in the world which carries as much salt in suspension as this sea, although the water of the Sea of Galilee, and of the Jordan, is sweet and pure, because it flows along rocks or over sand and is purified by the contact with air.

On the other hand, water at rest becomes stagnant. The stillness of the Dead Sea, contrasted with the flow of the river Jordan, furnished Bible writers with the great theme of the virtue of "living waters." To the north from this panoramic view could be seen the rugged ranges, peaks and undulating tops of the vast range which borders the desert to the east.

When they had silently viewed the scene for some time, the Doctor said: "I hope the view justifies you for making the visit?"

"It does, indeed," said Stanwood.

"It will be more interesting, however, if I call your attention to some particular things. You may remember that the Old Testament says Moses never reached the Promised Land, but that he was permitted to view it. All of that land to the west of the Jordan was called Canaan. We see that country now as Moses saw it. On the

ridge directly to the west of us, and where you see the glitter of towers and roofs, is Jerusalem. That is only twenty-two miles distant."

"But there seems to be another place way south of that; it looks like a town, anyway," said Winfield.

"You are right. That is Hebron. It is the oldest Biblical town, and was once an important city. It now contains about 20,000 people, of whom less than two hundred are Christians, the rest being Mussulmans."

"Isn't this the highest point?" asked Stanwood.

"No; there are several higher. The point beyond, and to the east of us is Mt. Pisgah, and directly north that highest mountain is Osha, which towers a thousand feet above us. I am glad you called my attention to that, because, as the day is very clear, it may permit us to see the mountains of salt."

The boys laughed. "Mountains of salt? Who ever heard of such a thing?" said Stanwood.

"Well, did you ever hear of pillars of salt?"

"Not that I remember," said Winfield.

"Did you ever hear of Lot's wife, how she was told that she must go on and not look back, but, that having disobeyed, she was turned into a pillar of salt?"

"Yes; I remember that now."

"If you will carefully look in that low place, to the west of the high mountain, you will see what looks like a streak of white, or gray. That is salt, veritable pillar after pillar of salt, and is in the

identical section where the Bible locates the scenes attending the calamity to Lot's wife."

They remained on the summit several hours and then began the descent to the west. In order to go down it was necessary to wind around in the most bewildering fashion, for there was only the faintest sort of trail, and sometimes this was lost, necessitating a return, so the right path could be located.

The three miles needed to get down into the valley required more than ten miles of travel, for they were now going to a much lower altitude than the town of Madeba, where they started the expedition up the mountain side.

Before reaching the valley, however, they had a thrilling experience, which took some of the interest out of their enthusiasm. Passing one of the numerous caves, which were observed all along, they stopped to look at some inscriptions above one of the openings.

Stanwood noticed a form glide past one of the grottoes further down, and drawing Winfield back, looked at the Doctor, and said in a whisper: "I saw a man sneaking past the big cave down there!"

The Doctor did not wait for further explanations, and drew a revolver. "We might expect them in these hills. It would be well to conceal ourselves and see what happens."

Acting on the suggestion they drew back, and worked their way past the mouth of the cave they were examining, to the turn of the path. The cave

below to which Stanwood pointed, was fully seventy-five feet distant. It was obvious that whoever it was had some motive in view, or he would have gone along the path upwardly, or descended along the little trail which was distinctly visible.

"Now, get into these places, and keep a good look out," said the Doctor. "He cannot possibly pass in either direction or scale the wall without we spot him."

They remained quiet for fully ten minutes, when the man, evidently assuming they had gone into the cave, peered from the corner of the rocky wall, not ten feet from the open cave where Stanwood had spied him. As his body appeared they noted that he wore a long yellow shirt, which reached his knees, and around his waist was a red and yellow striped band of some cotton goods, in which was sticking a villainous-looking knife, not unlike the yataghan.

He carried the long slim-looking gun which the people in these countries seem to favor. His body had not been fully exposed before the head of a second man appeared. The Doctor drew back. "So we have several fellows to deal with? We must remain quiet for the present. Have you any weapons?" he asked.

"No," answered Winfield.

The Doctor then took out a knife and seized a small branch, which was quickly severed, to provide two short sections. "You must use these as weapons," he said.

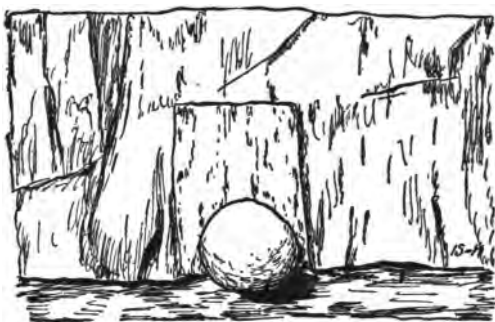
The boys opened their eyes in astonishment. "But how?" asked Winfield.

"Hold them this way in your hands, so as not to show the ends of them. If it comes to the worst I will show mine, and they will think you are similarly armed. Look at them! They are about to come up. Now, don't get excited. We can handle them if we are cool."

The robbers, for such they were, undoubtedly, quietly walked past the cave, rounded the corner of the cliff, and began the ascent. "When I say '*ready*,' step out with me, and hold your weapons down, so."

The bandits came on unsuspectingly, counting, no doubt, on surprising their victims as they emerged from the cave. They were now making the last climb up the slope which led to their cave, and suddenly darted into an opening out of sight.





CHAPTER XV

EXCITING EXPERIENCE WITH ROBBERS

THE Doctor and the boys were astounded at the sudden disappearance. Had they discovered the retreat where they were in hiding? It seemed like it, so they prudently awaited the next development, watching the spot where the disappearance took place, and the Doctor was about to offer a suggestion as to the course to be followed, when Winfield seized the Doctor by the arm, and pointed to the mouth of the cave to their left which they had left at the time the robbers were discovered.

It was evident that the opening through which they had disappeared, below the hill, was connected with the upper chamber, and if they had remained in the cave it would have placed them at the mercy of the villains.

In another instant both villains stood outside of the cave, wondering what had become of their prey. "If they go the other way, we are all right,

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but if they come this way our only hope is to overpower them," remarked the Doctor. "In either event get ready for the worst."

Instead of going up the hill as hoped they turned around and came toward them. "*Ready!*" said the Doctor, quietly. "Step out!"

The Doctor was the first to spring onto the path with his revolver pointing out straight, as he cried: "Ared." They stopped instantly. The Doctor shouted to drop their guns, and for a moment they stood irresolute, when he made a step forward, and again shouted a warning.

The guns dropped, and he demanded that they turn their backs. It did not require a second command. They obeyed, and were marched to the mouth of the cave, while Stanwood and Winfield picked up the guns.

"I see they are loaded," said the Doctor. "They may get a dose of their own medicine," he remarked pointing at the guns, and smiling. "Go up, Winfield, and remove their ammunition bags."

Winfield chuckled at the mission, nervous as he felt, as he handed the gun to the Doctor and marched up to the villains. The scowls on their faces were threatening, to say the least, but the mission was accomplished.

"I suppose we had better let them go now," said Stanwood.

"Let them go?" remarked the Doctor. "Not by any means. That would put the whole tribe

on our heels. Oh, no; they will have to go with us."

With a few words from the Doctor they turned and he indicated that they were to march down the hill, as with the revolver and two guns his side commanded the situation. "We must now look out that they do not lead us into their camp, or where they can get assistance. You, Stanwood, must keep an eye open for our rear. Keep a careful outlook in that direction. If you see the sign of any movement, however small, let me know."

The men, surly and wicked-looking, occasionally cast glances back and on each instance were warned by the Doctor. After a tramp of fully two miles, the first signs of habitation began to appear, and the Doctor said: "I think there is a village close at hand. I don't want to punish them too severely, so the moment we get near the village we can let them go."

"And give them guns?" said Stanwood in a protesting voice.

"Oh, no. We may want them ourselves," was the laughing reply.

A half mile beyond was a village plainly observable. The men were ordered to halt and turn around, then commanded to march. This was a curious proceeding to the fellows, who started off, and the boys watched them with a smile. They walked fully two hundred feet before looking back, and when they saw their late captors stand-

ing there and enjoying the situation, they gave vent to a series of imprecations, most of which the Doctor understood, while he laughed at their discomfiture.

He finally motioned to them to go on, but they stood there defiantly, until the Doctor leveled one of the guns and took deliberate aim. This was enough for them, and with a bound they disappeared.

"Well, we are in a couple of guns," said Stanwood, as he fondled the one he carried.

"I am afraid they are not as serviceable as our American guns, but they will *shoot*, there is no question on that point. The long barrel gives them a great range."

Within a few minutes they were marching through the village. "Do you know we are now 700 feet below the level of the Mediterranean Sea?"

"It doesn't seem possible," replied Winfield.

As they were passing out of the village the road ran past another one of the sheer walls so frequently observed on their route, but the interesting thing at this place was the row of tombs, or sepulchres, most of which were closed by huge slabs of stone, some of them neatly fitted in.

On two of these was a red substance like blood, and the boys started back aghast at the sight. "That is nothing which need alarm you, for it is not blood, but henna," the Doctor assured them.

"I never heard of henna before. What is it

like; and what is it used for?" asked Winfield, as he approached the door.

"Mahomet called the henna the 'chief flower in this world and in the next.' The leaves are powdered, and this makes a dark red dye, which looks very much like blood. I saw quite a number of bushes before we reached Madeba. It grows everywhere. There, do you see those hedges to the right? That is the henna plant."

"Why, we frequently saw that in India," said Stanwood.

"Undoubtedly; they use it for hedges in that country. It is a sacred plant, and the Moslems use a decoction of the plant to sprinkle on the doors of tombs and of houses, and frequently, also, the blood of an animal, principally a sheep, is used likewise."

"What is their belief about the use of the blood on the door?"

"That it wards off the evil one. This is undoubtedly derived from the Jewish rite of the Passover, when the blood of the lamb was sprinkled on the door post, so as to save the first born from the death visited on the Egyptians."

They examined some of the unoccupied tombs, most of which were, from all appearances, cut from the stone and were not natural caves. In several places were huge round stones resting against the stone slabs which formed the doors. "These, no doubt, remind you of the account of the tomb of Christ in the New Testament, where it speaks of the stone at the sepulchre, which was

found to be rolled away on the third day," said the Doctor, as they stood before one of them and examined its huge size.

"It must have taken a half dozen men to move one like that," commented Winfield.

"Yes, the greater the stone the more important is the one who lies buried within."

The village through which they passed was fully four miles from the river Jordan. The march was through a valley, the walls of the mountains being almost precipitous. At one place the scene reminded them of the Canyon of the Colorado, for the place was so narrow and the walls so steep that, notwithstanding the bright sun which was shining, it was dark and forbidding, and the stream which dashed along its rocky course made a doleful sound.

But the route they were taking was the only path to the crossing of the river. Every few minutes some cave or opening would make its appearance, and sometimes the walls would show great rifts where the seams had opened at the great convulsions of nature.

Two miles nearer the river the valley broadened out, and a new formation was visible. The rock looked darker, and in some places the sides were black. "It is singular," said the Doctor, "to note the different formations in these valleys. The black which you see is bitumen. Further to the north a great deal of it is mined."

"It seems that the walls are white, if you will look to the left," said Stanwood.

"But that is salt. It was one of the things I wanted to speak about. This was once a volcanic region, and along the valley of the Jordan and the Dead Sea, salt mountains have been raised up. Earthquakes have been known in this section also."

After an hour's walk, while turning around the end of a projecting point, a view of the Dead Sea suddenly burst on them. It was so startling that they stopped to view the mighty calm that rested on the waters. "No wonder it is called the Dead Sea," said Winfield.

There is little air within that vast pocket in the earth's surface. The water is so strongly impregnated with salt that it weighs much more than the fresh article and requires considerable wind to ruffle the surface. When the boys saw the water it was like a sheet of glass, and for a few moments they gazed in silence.

A little further along, and to the right, the river Jordan was discerned. The vegetation here was most profuse and the view through the tangled vines and intervening trees was most entrancing. At this point, near the mouth of the river, it flowed sluggishly, but a mile to the north the current was very perceptible, as they found on reaching the site of the ferry.

Two very serviceable boats were found at the place, and at a cost of about twenty cents each the transfer was made to the western shore, and they were now in the real land of Canaan.

"We shall soon pass over more historic ground. This is the region round about Jericho," said the Doctor.

"And is this the place where Joshua marched around the walls?" asked Winfield.

"I am not quite sure on that point," was the response.

An hour's march brought them to a large fountain, similar to many observed on the way, except that it was much larger. "Ah, this is the place," observed the Doctor. "This is called Joshua's fountain. It is here where Joshua besieged the city. You can still see the ruins of the walls which ran around the city."

Less than a half mile from the site of Jericho, the landscape was more forbidding. Here were numerous hot springs, and it is claimed that Herod and others from Jerusalem made frequent pilgrimages to these places, where they took advantage of the baths, just as we do in our times.

They passed through the Wady-el-Kelt, called the Valley of Achor, the side walls of which are perfectly steep and the space between the walls does not exceed forty feet, while the walls tower above five hundred feet.

Numerous caves were observed near the southern entrance, and the Doctor called attention to several of them, for it was obvious they were occupied. "Yes; many of them are still used for the purpose of storing grain," he said.

"Where do they get the grain?" asked Stanwood.

"You will see as we go further down the valley," was the reply.

The path still led upwardly. They were trying to reach the upland, where the ground was more level, and where the fields now appeared to be large enough to till. Here and there were fields that had been cut by the reapers; the olive trees were bare, but the vineyards were still full of luscious grapes.

At night they stopped at a little village, where they saw the first oil press, and nearby many hogsheads of olives from which the oil was to be extracted. Several large millstones were observed, each with a hole in the center, through which was placed a pole.

A man at each end pushed the stone back and forth on the mass of ripened olives, and when sufficiently crushed, the pulp was placed in bags and deposited in a crib. A heavy follower was let down on the mass, followed by several millstones which were used as weights, and the yellow oil flowed out in a stream from the stone spout at one side of the platform.

All along the road numerous beggars were now seen. This is a most common thing wherever people are found in the cultivated areas of Palestine, but in the mountainous regions, even though fairly well populated, the travelers were not troubled with them. The beggars were now found at every turn as Jerusalem was approached, and it was soon discovered that the only way to get rid of the pests was to avoid noticing them.

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In many of the walls were seen dozens of sepulchres, side by side, all of which were present-day burial places, and showed modern construction, but the old and streaked tombs, showing that they had existed for centuries, were much in the majority. Most of them were closed, some having huge stones piled against them, and in some instances trees were rooted between the stones which formed the guards to the stone doors.

"I am sorry that we cannot go by way of Bethel, for that was the resting place of the Ark, and there may be seen the tomb of Jehoshaphat."

"How far is it from Jerusalem?" asked Stanwood.

"Just twelve miles north of the city," was the reply.

The ground was now much more open and they were at an altitude which was over fifteen hundred feet above the level of the Dead Sea. To their left could be seen the round dome of the Mosque in Jerusalem and the spires and minarets which make the scene from the direction so noted.

In a field were observed several large stones which seemed to have been planted at certain intervals, like posts. "Are those the dolmans, or are they called menhirs?" asked Stanwood, as he stopped to view them.

"These are the menhirs which are found at many places throughout Palestine," remarked the Doctor.

"Let us go over and take a look at them," said Winfield.

They approached the largest in the field, and on nearing it saw that one side was covered with olive oil. "What does this mean?" asked Stanwood.

"Ah, they have performed their rites here, I see," remarked the Doctor. "As these are regarded sacred, and have within them the indwelling deity, they must give them the oil of the season. These libations of oil were called Bethels, from which the town takes its name. The word means 'habitations of God.'"

"While in San Francisco we saw several tall trees, with funny markings on them, which they called Totem poles, and the man who showed them said that in many places the Indians had tall, slim stones that were marked in the same way, and that the Alaskan Indians thought they were sacred," observed Winfield.

"It is obvious that this stone worship comes from the same source or had a common origin. In Central America are still found walls with curious markings, and shafts of stone with religious inscriptions on them. The Bible refers to the 'Rock that was Christ'; St. Peter was called the Rock upon which the church should be built; in fact, the rock or stone is a symbol the world over of perpetuity and power."

In the last rough part of the journey upwardly they passed two caves before which mendicants were seated. Peering within the larger one, it was noticed that people were living there, the interior being cut up into apartments. The ceiling

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of this one must have been thirty feet high.

They were now within three miles of Jerusalem and anxious to reach the place. It was hard to tell which were the most numerous, donkeys or beggars. The latter were at every corner, with outstretched hands. The donkeys, however, were very patient, businesslike animals, and tripped along briskly with loads that for bulkiness, at least, were entirely out of proportion to the size of the animals.

About everything going into Jerusalem, or carried out to the country, is transported on the backs of these animals. They can be hired for ten cents an hour, or fifty cents a day, and for short trips are very serviceable, for they are easily ridden and are not difficult to handle. Camels, however, also form a large part of the transportation but only for the long hauls.

They were now nearing the northern wall of the city. The crest of the great ridge west of the Dead Sea was reached, and the altitude was 2,500 feet. Looking across to the east could be seen the entire mountain range beyond the Jordan. The Dead Sea was visible its entire length, as well as the valley of the river Jordan, but the Sea of Galilee was hidden by the hills.

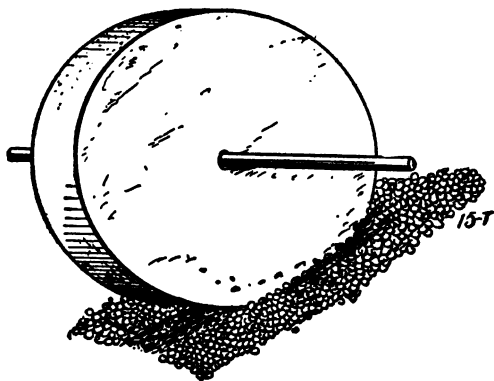
The northeast corner of the city walls was reached. "We can now enter the city either on the northern or on the eastern side. Herod's Gate is in the north and St. Stephen's Gate in the eastern wall. Now, which way shall we take?" asked the Doctor.

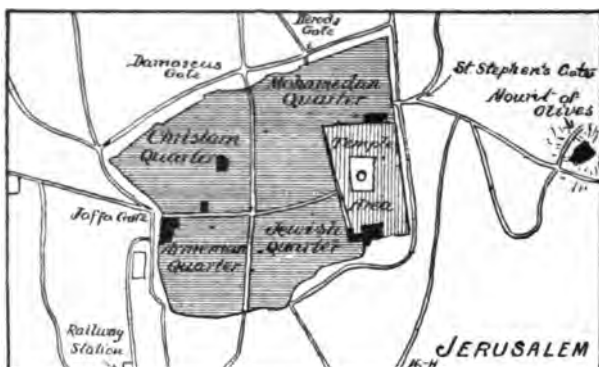
"What is that curious procession over there?" asked Winfield, as he pointed to the west.

"That is a funeral procession on its way to Calvary, the hill beyond, where now may be found the Mohammedan cemetery," was the answer.

"Then suppose we take the road to the west and enter the city at Herod's Gate," suggested Stanwood.

The road from the north was about fifteen hundred feet from the road leading to the cemetery. As they neared the latter road several processions, like the one first noted, came into view. The procession particularly noted was preceded by four blind men, who were chanting a dirge; these were followed by the bier on the shoulders of four brawny men, and bringing up the rear were the mourners and friends.





CHAPTER XVI

PALESTINE. TRIP TO THE MEDITERRANEAN

JERUSALEM is divided into four distinct quarters. The northeast section is given over to the Mohammedans, and occupies about one-half of the area of the city. The Christian section is in the northwest part, the Armenian in the southwest and the Jewish in the southeast areas.

A very wide street, extending north and south, from the Damascus Gate in the north to Zion's Gate in the south, forms the dividing line between the Christians and Armenians on one side and the Mohammedans and Jews on the other side.

A similar imposing street, running east and west from the Jaffa Gate to the Temple area, divides the Christians and Mohammedans in the north from the Armenians and Jews in the south. Extending north and south along the eastern wall of the city is a deep gulch, called valley of the

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Kedron, and directly to the east, and about three quarters of a mile distant, is Mount of Olives, which is over one hundred and fifty feet higher than any point in Jerusalem.

At that place is the Church of the Ascension, and to the south of it the Tombs of the Prophets. About half way from St. Stephen's Gate to Mount of Olives is the Garden of Gethsemane.

The boys and the Doctor first found a comfortable inn and washed themselves. Then, after making inquiries, they were directed to the office of the transportation company, where they found their valise. A visit to the post office was the most interesting part of the day's experience, for a bundle of letters awaited them there.

They hurriedly returned to the hotel, and after depositing the suitcase, began to examine the letters. A half dozen from Mrs. Bailey and three from Mr. Castleton demanded their attention first. They were glad to know that some of their letters had reached home, but the last one acknowledged by Mr. Castleton was written to him while they were on the steamer going from Rangoon to Madras.

More newspaper clippings were enclosed, some from papers which had given accounts of the travels of the boys by quotations, and one from a Japanese paper. It was observed that the last letter had a postmark, Genoa, Italy, so it seemed that the mail was now being sent by way of the Atlantic and Mediterranean Sea.

When all the home news had been digested,

they turned to the others. "Here is one from Mr. Norton," said Stanwood in high glee. "I wonder if that postmark means Teheran; you know that is the place he was bound for."

"Open it quickly," said Winfield eagerly. Mr. Norton had written a characteristic letter, and they read and reread it. He told of his plans, and of the great treat he found in upper Persia, and also related some thrilling experiences when the Russian forces came from the north and met the Turkish army a day's march west of their hunting grounds.

"I wonder who sent this from Bombay?" said Winfield. "Well, here is a letter from Howard Ralston. I wonder what he has to say?" and Winfield tore open the envelope. A slip fell out and Stanwood pounced on it, while Winfield held up the letter and commenced to read.

It announced the receipt of the purse, thanked the boys for their find, and stated that he hoped the enclosed \$100 would be accepted by them, not as a reward, but as an appreciation in part for the service they had rendered him. "That was easy work," said Stanwood, "but we must take it, because we have earned it," and he cast a sly look at Winfield, who smiled in his happiness.

"But where is the money?" he asked.

Stanwood laughingly exhibited the check. "Why, it is payable at the Oriental Branch Bank, and we have a letter of introduction to the manager from Mr. Norton," he said. "Suppose we hunt up the bank at once."

The bank was not far away, and as they were passing in they noticed the Doctor enter a door on which was the word "Manager."

"There is the Doctor going into the room to see Mr. Richardson," said Winfield. "What do you think we ought to do? Wait until the Doctor comes out?"

"Any one you wish to see?" asked an attendant.

"Yes; we have a letter here for Mr. Richardson."

The attendant took it and entered the room. In a moment the Doctor appeared at the door and requested them to enter. "I am so glad to see you here," he said; "and to think that you should have a letter to my friend from a friend of mine," he said.

Winfield produced the draft, explaining the circumstances attending the recovery of the purse and of his own funds from the Arab thief. Mr. Richardson read Mr. Ralston's letter and remarked: "I believe you have a credit here for some funds."

"How does that happen?" asked Stanwood.

"Mr. Norton said he owed you something and has made a payment on account," was the answer. "How much shall I give you in currency?" he asked.

The boys were astounded at this announcement. "How much money have we here?" asked Winfield, after he had recovered on hearing the news of the funds.

"With this draft you have two hundred and fifty dollars. I can give you exchange for two hundred dollars in small checks and fifty dollars in currency, which, I presume, might be the most convenient way of carrying it in this country."

"Thank you for the suggestion," said Stanwood.

They were handed the funds in Turkish money, and given five checks of forty dollars each. On returning to the hotel they sat for some time in contemplation over the satisfactory termination of their journey over the most difficult route. "I wouldn't take another route if I had to do it over again," said Winfield.

"Nor I," answered Stanwood. "Isn't it glorious to look back and think of the people we have met, and of our experiences in the different countries? It was fortunate, too, that wherever we went some one was always on hand to tell us about the Shintos, Buddhist, Nestorians, or Mohammedans and of the many curious customs."

When the Doctor returned to the hotel he greeted the boys with enthusiasm. "I suppose you will take several days in looking around before starting for Constantinople?" he asked.

"Yes; and it would be far more pleasant for us to have your company?" answered Stanwood.

"I was going to suggest a trip to the south, because you will see much of the country north of Jerusalem, if you finally decide to go in that direction."

Three donkeys were engaged for the trip.

Bethlehem lies six miles directly south of the city, but is not visible from Jerusalem on account of a high intervening hill. The town contains, at the present time, about six thousand people and it is scattered over considerable territory, the houses being mainly single stories.

Here David was born, and later Christ. The stable spoken of in the New Testament was a grotto, a large cave opening, such as were observed in various places. Over this grotto now stands a Roman Basilica, built by the Emperor Constantine in the year 330.

"At this side is a cloister, the one with the low arch, in which St. Jerome lived during the time he translated the Bible into the Latin, which is called the Vulgate edition," said the Doctor.

East of the town is a large field. This is pointed out as the identical place where the "shepherds were abiding in the fields."

Hebron lies fifteen miles south of Jerusalem, its altitude being 500 feet higher than Jerusalem. The nine-mile ride from Bethlehem required over three hours, as the roads were one continual succession of twists and defiles. Some of the time, however, was spent in observing the customs of the people.

In various places were ruins of ancient cities crumbling to dust. Palestine has, naturally, a rich soil. Even in the mountain defiles some kinds of vegetation are being cultivated, but the principal dependence is on the grapevine, and on the luxuriant fig trees, that are seen everywhere.

Both these fruits grow in a wild state on all the mountains, and it requires but little cultivation to make them profitable to the people.

It can be understood, therefore, why the sacred writers regarded the vine and the fig trees as symbolical of peace and contentment, and the aim of every husbandman.

"I thought it would be interesting to see Hebron, because it is a city which was built long before history began to take note of things. It is certainly more than four thousand years old," said the Doctor, as they ascended the last stretch of road which led into the town.

"How large is the place now?" inquired Winfield.

"I don't think it contains more than ten thousand people."

The only thing of importance in the town is the great mosque, which was erected over the cave of Macphelah. This is also the burial place of many of the Patriarchs and for some years after David took the throne it was his capital.

On every side of the town were hundreds of sepulchres, and most of them had large stones rolled against the doors. "The people have the same habits and wear the same costumes that they had two thousand years ago," said the Doctor. "Some five years ago I had an experience near here, which illustrates the matter in one particular. I was unfortunate enough to be pursued by some robbers, and for safety fled to a small house, and entered it.

"The old man had terror written on his countenance when I entered, which was intensified when he saw the robbers. The latter, however, suddenly withdrew, after a time, as the old man notwithstanding his fright had prevented the robbers from entering simply by holding up his hands.

"I could not understand why they had stopped and were awed by the old man, but afterwards learned that he was the father of the thieves, and that he did not protect me because he refused to countenance their evil practices, but because, having crossed his threshold, he was responsible for my life. A guest within their houses is sacred, and they must protect them at the risk of their own lives. 'The stranger within' your gates meant something to the people of old."

The return to Jerusalem was made by following a detour to the east, and passing along the base of the hills which overlook the Dead Sea, until Bethany was reached, northeast of the Mount of Olives. This town has now less than fifty huts, all inhabited by Moslems. It means "house of poverty," and the dilapidated condition of the place indicates poverty of the lowest kind. It was the home of Lazarus, of Martha and Mary and of the leper Simon, and is frequently mentioned in the Bible.

On returning to Jerusalem, they had a consultation as to the route to be followed. The Doctor announced that it would not be safe for him to go to Constantinople, owing to the fact that Turkey was a combatant in the war and it was a

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difficult matter to get transportation from any point on the Palestine coast.

The boys would have preferred to go direct to Greece and then to Italy, thus bringing them into the war zone through France. But all steamers from Joppa and Beirut were Turkish, and were now out of commission, since the English controlled the Mediterranean. A railroad ran from Jerusalem to Joppa, a distance of forty miles, and Mr. Richardson informed them that there were coasting steamers which would take them up the coast to Beirut, where connection could be made with the railroad running from Damascus to Constantinople.

There was still another route, which they contemplated for some time, and that was to go overland directly north and strike the railway which runs east from Haifa, past the Sea of Galilee, and thence to Damascus; but that seemed to be a roundabout course, and the Doctor and Mr. Richardson both advised against it.

"I will go with you to Joppa," said the Doctor, "but there I must get a steamer which will take me to Port Said, as my next field of duty is in Egypt. I understand the train leaves at about eight in the morning."

It was gratifying to learn that the Doctor would go to the coast, and the evening was spent in taking a run to the Temple area, where the Doctor explained that the high place, on which the Temple was built, is called Mount Moriah. It was the site of Solomon's Temple.

There they noticed the Cross of Jerusalem on a huge banner. It is made in the figure of two bars crossing each other at right angles, the end of each bar having a T-head, and within each of the four corners is a plain cross.

"Is this building Solomon's Temple of which we read in the Bible?" asked Stanwood.

"No, indeed. Three temples were built on this spot, the first being Solomon's, which was entirely destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar; the second temple was erected by Zerubbabel, and destroyed by Pompey and Herod; while the third, and most magnificent of the three, was built by Herod, and this was completely wiped out by the Romans seventy years after the birth of Christ."

Near the northern end of the Temple area, as the ground surrounding the site of the Temple is called, is the Pool of Bethesda, and at the southern end is a great mosque for the worship of Mohammedans.

At eight o'clock the following morning all were at the station. In order to reach it they passed out the Jaffa gate in the western wall, and turned to the south past the Armenian section crossing the Valley of Hinnon on the way.

In the three hours' run to Joppa no places of great note were passed excepting the valley of Sherat which, tradition says, was the birthplace of Samson. At one point about ten miles from Joppa, the top of Mount Pisgah can be seen, and, of course, the entire range from the Sea of Galilee to the region south of Jerusalem is visible.

The whole of the plains west of the high ridge to the sea is very fertile, and was once inhabited by a large number of people, but it is not now thickly settled.

Joppa is the ancient name of the town, the modern one being Jaffa, and it has about 45,000 inhabitants. It is frequently mentioned in the Bible, and it was several times taken by the Crusaders, and was even stormed by Napoleon.

"I am sorry that it will be impossible to go with you to the north, but duty compels me to go the other way. I have enjoyed the trip with you immensely. Such association goes a long way toward reconciling me to my work. It will always be remembered, and I hope we may meet in the future," said the Doctor, at the parting.

The boys were much affected when bidding him farewell. His great familiarity with the country, his wide knowledge and experience among Eastern people and the happy manner in which he entered into the things which interest boys, made them especially feel his departure.

"I wish we could tell you how much we enjoyed your company," said Winfield. "It has been the most pleasant part of our journey, since we became acquainted with you."

"For my part," said Stanwood, "I just feel as though we are bound to see each other again. It doesn't seem as though we were saying good-by for good."

Luckily the Doctor found a small coasting steamer which was ready to sail, and accompany-

ing him to the wharf, the boys remained in his company until the boat had moved away, and even then they stood on the dock and watched it disappear before they felt like returning to the hotel in the city.

During the day they had the satisfaction of learning that the steamer lying at the opposite dock from the one visited in the morning, called the *Yafa*, would sail for Tyre, a distance of eighty miles up the coast, and within fifty miles of the objective point, Beirut.

No time was lost in taking the suitcase to the landing and boarding the boat. It was a little vessel, hardly larger than a tug, but the room assigned to them was comfortable. The speed of the vessel was not over fifteen miles an hour, and it hugged the shore uncomfortably close, as they thought, but there was a reason for that. The Mediterranean Sea was being patrolled by hostile ships, and it was necessary to keep close inshore, so as to be able quickly to find shelter in the little bays, in case the ships of the Allies came too close.

The run to Tyre consumed six hours and it was past five in the afternoon when the spires and minarets of this famous town were fairly discerned through the haze that was settling down along the coast. Next to Sidon this is the oldest town of ancient Phœnicia. It was a great city in the time of Solomon, but now has less than 6,000 people.

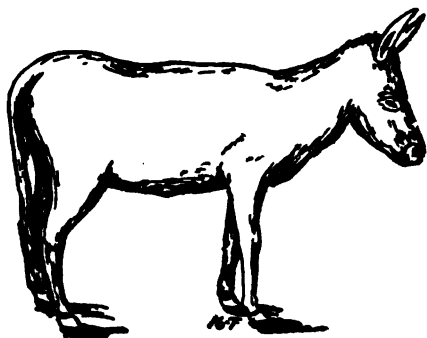
At the dock where they fastened the boat was a more pretentious steamer, on which was the

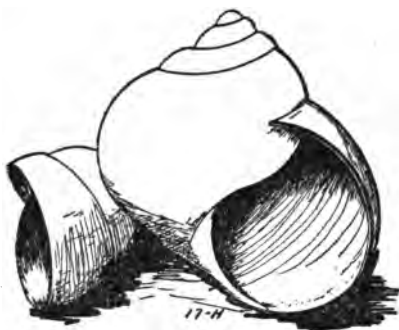
word *Beirut*. "Probably that goes to Beirut," said Winfield. "I will go over and see."

He found it was the regular vessel, due to sail in the morning, and would land them at their destination before noon, so they passed from the rocky island where the boat docked, across the causeway which connects the island with the city on the mainland and there found a hotel.

There was a great furore in the city the following morning and, quickly dressing, the boys reached the street and inquired as to the cause of the fast gathering crowds. The people were wild at the news of the war, and without stopping to make further inquiries the travelers found themselves moving along with the mass.

The particular occasion for the excitement was the appearance of a troop of Turkish cavalry, which had marched over the highway, along a crest, to the east of the city.





CHAPTER XVII

CAPTURED BY SYRIAN BANDITS

PHœNICIA proper is but a small country, less than 35 miles wide, and not exceeding 200 miles in length. But it has a remarkable soil. The coast people were skillful navigators, and peopled many of the islands of the Mediterranean Sea. Their vessels had passed out through the Straits of Gibraltar, touched England, in the earliest time, and secured tin from the Welsh mines long before the Christian era.

In their wanderings the boys were delighted to smell the pleasing odors of the cedar woods which were piled high along the wharf, and in their stroll they saw by accident several men, who were undoubtedly Englishmen, engaged in measuring and handling the lumber.

Winfield addressed one of them, who replied in English, and in answer to his questions said:

"All this cedar comes from the mountains to the east of us, along the Lebanon ridge, about

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fifteen or twenty miles distant. We send it all over the world." The "Cedars of Lebanon" have a place in history.

"Would you mind telling us what they do with the snails we saw on the flat boats?" asked Stanwood.

"They are used to make purple dyes. By breaking the shells you will see that they are colored within," was the answer.

The *Beirut* was boarded in the morning, and at eleven o'clock the harbor of Sidon was entered for an hour's stop. This is the oldest of all cities on the eastern coast. It still has a population of over 12,000. Numerous vessels were being loaded with cedar, as at Tyre, but neither Stanwood nor Winfield felt like leaving the vessel for an investigation of the town.

Two hours after leaving Sidon the *Beirut* docked at the city of that name, and the office of the railway company was sought for in order to get reliable information concerning trains to the north.

On the boat to Beirut very disquieting rumors were afloat about transportation facilities, as the railway from Damascus had been taken over by the Turkish government, for the transportation of troops. While coasting steamers were running north along the coast as far as Alexandretta, which is less than fifty miles from the Bagdad railway, they were advised not to risk the boats, because the Allies were in the neighborhood of

Cyprus in great force with their warships, and the coast steamers would always be in jeopardy.

The suggestion was made therefore, that the trip should be made overland, by rail to Hamath, one hundred and twenty miles to the northeast, and from that point conveyances would take them across the country to Aleppo, seventy miles distant. A train would leave within the hour, and that suited them, so, taking a hasty luncheon, the car was boarded, after placing the suit case aboard, and the train pulled out promptly.

The road passes through the most delightful country in Syrian Turkey. This region is famous for the silk worm, and the production of fine silk. It is also a region where grapes grow in abundance, and on every side the landscape is embellished with magnificent cedar trees.

A fellow traveler informed them that they would pass over, or through the defiles, of the mountains of Lebanon, and in about two hours would reach the town of Baalbec, a place famous for its immense ruins.

"What a magnificent road," said Winfield, as they passed along a highway that was close by the railway.

"Yes," remarked their companion. "That is one of the most famous highways in the world. It is a great military road, and along it have marched the armies of Egypt, Assyria, Greece and Rome, countless times. The wonderful fertility of the soil all along the eastern end of the Medi-

terranean, and the vast store of natural products, made this section a bone of contention for over two thousand years."

"Why is it that there are so many ruins here? Why haven't the cities kept on growing instead of dwindling down to nothing, if the soil is so good?" asked Stanwood.

"It is attributable to two things: In the first place, some of the great places were destroyed by the conquerors, but the great cities, such as Baalbec, and many others along the coast, were overthrown by the numerous earthquakes, to which this region was subject."

"Then Palestine must also be in the belt where earthquakes are frequent?" queried Winfield.

"Yes, indeed; many of the cities east of Jerusalem were destroyed in that way. But the immense ruins at Baalbec will interest you. The train stops a half hour there, and it will give us just a passing glimpse if you wish to take advantage of it."

"We do, most assuredly," said Winfield.

Within two hours of the time of starting, the train halted at a neat station. For more than an hour the two engines which were attached to the short train had been puffing as they made the ascent. They were now at an altitude of seven thousand feet, but all around them were peaks and ridges still higher.

"These mountains must be pretty high," said Stanwood.

"This range has an altitude of fully twelve

thousand feet. Notice the plains between the two ridges to the left. There the city was located. As we pass along this street we shall soon see the ruins of the two great Temples in the Acropolis."

"I never heard of the city before," said Winfield. "Was it famous for anything but these ruins?"

"The Old Testament speaks about the worship of Baal. The religion of Baal was the adoration of the sun. The word means 'the city of the Sun.' The city was totally destroyed by an earthquake in 1759." It was but a few moments' walk until they reached the edge of the Acropolis, from which the grandeur of the masonry and the remains of the wonderful architecture could be observed.

The two ruins seemed to vie with each other in the extent of the debris. At two places were great seams in the earth which, although now partly filled with debris, plainly showed how the rift in the earth must have swallowed up a great portion of the city, and caused the immense pillars of the Temples to fall and crush everything about them.

The train started promptly on time, and after an hour's further climb the grade was downwardly, and the train began to make up for the time lost in climbing the steep mountain. Toward the east was a grand scene, the immense trees, which seemed to grow everywhere, lending a charm to the vari-colored rocks that could be seen between.

Three hours after leaving Baalbec the train stopped at a town called Homs. "Here," said their companion, "is a town which, in ancient times, was second in importance only to Baalbec, and it had also a large temple dedicated to the sun, the ruins of which can be seen as the train leaves the town."

It was after six o'clock before the train reached Hamah, or Hamath, as it was known in ancient times. "Is this town of any importance?" asked Winfield.

"No, its glory has departed, like that of many others. I do not think there are over ten thousand people living here. In the time of David and Solomon, this city, and all to the south of it, along the sea, was part of their dominions, and the city extended for miles over these plains."

"How far to the north do you go?" asked Stanwood.

"This is my destination," he remarked. "Is it your intention to proceed north?" he asked.

"Yes; we want to reach the railway which will take us to Constantinople," remarked Winfield.

"I fear you have taken a very inopportune time. From the last information I had it is a difficult matter to travel on the trains."

"We heard that before leaving Beirut," said Stanwood; "but we could not find a route open from Joppa, so had to take this route."

"There will be no difficulty in reaching Aleppo, although there is a bitter feeling among the people against the English. Your passports will be very

serviceable in the journey to Aleppo, I dare say."

They remained at the hotel where their companion stopped, and in the morning he was kind enough to direct the boys to the keeper of a livery establishment to help them arrange the terms and conditions for the most convenient trip to Aleppo.

The man said: "The charge will be about double of that required in ordinary times, as my men must take the risk of detention, and the attendant cost."

"What will the charge be?" asked Stanwood.

"Two pounds," was the answer.

"That will be satisfactory," said Winfield.

"How soon can the man be ready to start?"

"In an hour," was the reply.

"Can you give us a man who speaks English?" asked Stanwood.

"Oh, yes; he understands the language well, but it must not be known that you are English."

"But we are not English; we are Americans," said Winfield.

"Then how is it you speak English?"

"Because all Americans speak English."

When the boys returned to the rendezvous, a half hour thereafter, they saw the provision which had been made for their transportation. Three donkeys, somewhat larger than those noticed in Palestine, were lined up, each being provided with a curious saddle. The latter was made with a wooden seat, not concaved, or hollowed out to afford a comfortable seat, according to our view

of ease in a saddle. Instead it was rounded, cylindrical in form, with a guard behind, to prevent the body from slipping off, while at its front was an upwardly-projecting stem that served as a hand-hold while riding.

The boys laughed at the contrivance, but were soon mounted, and Beuto, their driver, took the third donkey, leading the way out along a highway to the north. From Hamath to Aleppo is a vast plain, the soil being adapted to raise any kind of vegetation. Fields of wheat were observed, and in many places could be seen rows of carefully attended vineyards.

Fig trees also were cultivated, and not permitted to grow in a wild state, as in many places in Arabia. Sheep and cattle were in abundance, and from the appearance of things in the first two hours of travel the boys hoped to have a comfortable time in the journey.

The first town of any importance reached was a place called Sejar, on the Asi River. A pompous official leered at the boys as they dismounted. Evidently, they were taken for Englishmen, as the official signaled for a man who was armed, to approach. Beuto quickly advised him that the boys were Americans, but he waived the driver aside, and assumed a threatening attitude.

Winfield drew out his passport, and Stanwood did the same. This was the first time in all their travels that it had been required. He took them and glanced over the documents, and while doing so glared at them frequently. The action was a

very peculiar one, as the official did not understand English, and the boys did not know in what tongue he was speaking.

On the order of the official the boys, donkeys and drivers were then taken to a two story building, the only one in the village, and ushered into a room where three men sat at tables. After addressing one of them, a young man, the latter arose and addressed the boys.

"Where did you get these passports?" he asked.

"From our own government," answered Winfield.

"Through what countries have you passed?"

"Japan, China, Siam, Burma, India, Persia, and Arabia," answered Stanwood.

"Why did you not have the passports viséed?"

The boys looked at each other in astonishment, while the official's eyes gleamed. "I do not know what you mean?" answered Winfield.

"I mean just what I said. Why did you not get a consul somewhere in some of the countries to visé the passports?"

"We didn't know it was necessary," said Stanwood. "Don't you see this is my picture, and that is Winfield's photo. Isn't that enough?" asked Stanwood.

"That is no evidence to us. When you enter a country it is customary to exhibit a passport, which is then certified to, or viséed, by the consul, and it seems that you have entered Turkey without having had this done."

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"You are the first fellow who has asked me to show the passports," said Stanwood, somewhat irritated.

There was a long consultation, at the end of which the passports were handed back, and the driver advised that they were free. There was no delay in leaving the town, where they had been detained for fully an hour.

An hour out of the town the river was crossed, and the little donkeys marched along briskly. Before the sun had entirely disappeared they crossed a stretch of ground that was filled with a remarkable array of finely-chiseled columns or the broken remains of what must have comprised immense buildings.

"I do not know what these are," said Beuto, "but there are plenty of these old buildings along the river for many miles."

"What is the name of this town?"

"Kalaat-el-Medik," was the answer.

It was a larger and much more imposing town than Sejar, and before they had barely stopped the donkeys, an official spoke to Beuto. The latter said: "The government official says we must go to the compound."

"What does he mean by the compound?" asked Winfield.

"That is the place where the chief officer of the village lives," said Beuto, and, following the individual who notified them, all were soon within the gate which led through a heavy stone wall.

Beuto spoke a few words to the official, and



* * * *the appearance of a troop of Turkish cavalry* * * *

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after waiting fifteen minutes a short, chunky individual confronted them. He looked at the boys, and said: "Haf you bassborts?"

"We have," said Winfield, and the boys promptly produced them.

After adjusting his glasses he said: "I see you no haf de documents attested by consul."

The boys now knew what the trouble was, and Winfield replied:

"We are traveling around the world and have gone through a great many countries, and this is the first time, excepting in a little town back here, where they have asked us to show these papers."

"Dis country is in a state of war, and we must brotect ourselves," he remarked.

"We are from New York, and that is our home. These are our pictures," said Stanwood.

The sun had set fully two hours before they were released and permitted to secure accommodations at a hotel. Everywhere they went people stared at them with a peculiar air that was extremely uncomfortable. Beuto could not explain it, and they retired, shortly after the evening meal, in ignorance of the meaning of the hostile attitude of the natives.

The following morning Beuto informed them that a week previous two Englishmen had been captured on the railroad north of that place, who had planned to destroy the railway bridges over the Bagdad route, and all were, therefore, suspicious of their nationality. One of the things which contributed to the suspicion, was the fact

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that the Englishmen wore the same kind of khaki suits that the boys had, and when this was explained, they hurried back to their rooms, and were not slow in donning the suits which Mr. Winthrop had so generously provided for them in Hong Kong.

Thus equipped they felt more comfortable, and marched out of the hotel, mounting their donkeys with more assurance. Beuto informed the boys that they would now leave the river and direct their course toward a town called Marra, which was half way to Aleppo.

As they advanced it was observed that the fields were more sparsely cultivated. It was much wilder, and the houses were farther and farther apart. Frequently the road led through heavy forests, principally cedar and oak. Very dense underbrush was covering fields which had the finest kind of soil. Several times they passed houses which were falling into decay.

These things were noted and commented upon during the entire forenoon, but they paid no attention to it, except to contrast the condition with the other parts of the route from Beirut. Beuto said that the people were moving to a new section to the east, and this part of the country was being neglected, in consequence.

While thus conversing Stanwood noted two men on horseback ahead, and instantly called Winfield's attention to them. "One of them has a gun," he said.

Before either had time to question Beuto, two

others rode up by the side of the boys, from the dense shrubbery, and commanded them to halt. Beuto protested, in the native language, but they made a threatening gesture, and he wisely ceased talking.





CHAPTER XVIII

ESCAPE IN THE NIGHT. CONSTANTINOPLE

THE two men first observed rode up, and after a few words to Beuto, the latter said: "We must get off."

The boys dismounted, while one of the men did likewise. "They are going to rob us," said Beuto, "and we must do as they say or they may kill us."

The boys had about thirty-five dollars in cash, and also drafts amounting to two hundred dollars. The eyes of the men lit up with delight as they saw the money. The wallets were examined, and their hearts sank within them as the tall man, who seemed to be the leader, quickly appropriated the drafts, and after glancing at the passports, shoved them into a greasy slit in the side of his jacket.

"I suppose as they have about everything now, they will let us go?" said Stanwood.

Beuto talked with them for a few moments and turning to the boys, said: "They say we must go with them."

The moment this information was imparted, they were ordered to mount the animals, and with one of the men ahead and the other three behind, the procession marched forward, first through a forest, and then past several dismantled houses, stopping before two which seemed to be tenanted.

Entering one of them with their captors, the tall man drew out the drafts, and producing a pen and ink, laid the papers on the table, dipped the pen into a horn of ink, and commanded Winfield to sign his name on the back.

He hesitated for a moment. Then, with quite a flourish he wrote his name, and beneath placed the words: "This has been stolen from us."

Stanwood glanced at the signature, reading the inscription, and almost gave an exclamation of joy as the chief handed him the pen. He also signed and added: "On the road near Marra."

When this was done they were taken to the adjoining building, and after being invited to enter, the door was closed and barred. At one side was an opening in the main wall, where there was, originally, a window. This was closed up with stone and mortar, but after a little experimenting a crack was made of sufficient size to enable them to observe the actions of the gang.

Beuto was instructed to proceed to Aleppo, that was evident, for the attitude of the gang was very threatening, as they handed him the drafts and also the two passports. Within a half hour Beuto was mounted on his donkey, and had disappeared to the north. Following him, not a quarter of a

mile distant, was one of the men who had held them up. He was, in all probability, the spy who was set to follow the movements of Beuto.

Thus, for the second time, they were in the clutches of a band of robbers. "I don't think they intend to hold us for ransom," said Winfield with a smile, for it must be said that they were not unduly alarmed at the state of affairs.

"Well, it is very uncomfortable, anyhow. If we get to Aleppo the first thing to do is to write to Mr. Richardson, and I know he will help us out, because I haven't a cent left," said Stanwood, as he fished around in his pockets. While doing so he drew out a piece of parchment. "What is this? It is a wonder they didn't find this paper; they have taken about everything else."

"What is it?" asked Winfield, listlessly, with his eye still at the crack.

"It's the Sheik's letter, sure enough," he almost shouted.

Winfield's interest in the crack suddenly ceased, as he turned and glanced at the document. "Well, how is it about the talisman?" he asked.

"Yes, indeed; I had forgotten about that," answered Stanwood.

The latter held the precious document in his hand, and discussed the situation. They waited and hoped that some one would soon appear, so that an opportunity could be afforded to show the document and the talisman. But after fully two hours of waiting the situation seemed to be more and more hopeless.

It was now evident to them that they were immured until Beuto could go to Aleppo and secure the money. The distance, from there, was fully fifty miles, and it was obvious, from the slow gait that the donkeys made in the previous part of the journey, Aleppo would not be reached that afternoon. Possibly Beuto would get there the next day, late in the afternoon, and that would mean two days more for the return.

"I am going to see what this place is made of," said Winfield. "I don't believe in being penned up like a couple of rats."

The building was of stone, with a very low ceiling. The room was about twenty feet square, and the two outlets, which were originally formed in the two opposite walls, and intended for windows, had been sealed up with stone and mortar. In the other wall was the only door, which was made of heavy timbers carefully fastened together.

There was no furniture whatever in the place. The only light for the room came from an opening through the middle of the ceiling which was covered with a grating of logs. The house was built like many in Persia and east Arabia, where they had noticed smoke pouring out the central opening in the ceiling, for they have no chimneys in Persian houses.

The window which faced the house at which they had dismounted had several small openings, which, on being enlarged, afforded them a view of part of the house beyond, and also opportunity to see past the house to the north. For the past

hour or more no sound whatever reached their ears.

"The villains are waiting until Beuto returns, I suppose," said Winfield. "I wish I could get up there and try those logs."

The floor, which was of clay, was discolored with the rain that had found its way through the openings between the logs, and after Stanwood glanced up, he said: "Get up on my shoulders and see if you can move them."

Winfield did not need a second invitation. Standing on Stanwood's shoulders he could easily reach the obstructions. After a strong effort it was evident that escape in that direction would be impossible. "Then, let us try the windows. I think we can pick out the mortar," said Stanwood as he made a careful examination.

"Work at the other window. I don't think there is a house on the other side," suggested Winfield.

They still retained their knives, and with these began to remove the mortar, which, on examination was found to be simply mud, the universal mortar in eastern countries. A half hour's work revealed an opening, through which a view was obtained of the surroundings.

Several hundred feet beyond was a house, one of the ruins which was observed when they rode in. "This is lucky," said Winfield.

"We might make a mistake if we should get out now. Don't you think we ought to wait until it is dark?" asked Stanwood.

"Yes; get that last stone back as soon as possible," replied Winfield.

"Now we must also remove all the dirt and scatter it about, so if they should come in they will not see we are trying to get away," remarked Stanwood, as he commenced to scrape the dirt together, and began to lay the stones back into the breach which had been made.

There was a sudden commotion outside, before the work was fully accomplished. The door was opened not to exceed a foot, and through this a bowl was pushed; also a wooden platter containing black bread. The door was then closed without a word. The bowl contained a stew, and it wasn't bad.

They carried the bowl to the center of the room, so that it was directly beneath the little streams of light which came in from that source. "Sorry they didn't include knives, forks and napkins in the course, but it's better than nothing," said Stanwood.

Nothing of the meal was left when they were through. "Some more of the same kind would be acceptable," suggested Winfield, but the bandits didn't take the hint, for they received no more.

"I wonder if they don't intend to give us anything to sleep on?" said Winfield. "This is a poor return for upwards of two hundred dollars which they are getting."

"I have about made up my mind that when money comes as easy as that did, it isn't so awfully hard to let it go," said Stanwood.

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"Of course not; but it's the awful fix we are in; come, let's open that hole. It's dark enough now," suggested Winfield, as he walked over to the opening and pulled out the stones. It was the work of less than fifteen minutes until the second stone was removed, and an opening obtained that could be increased by sliding off several of the lower courses.

Stanwood was the first to crawl out, which he did feet first. As he was about to drop down he whispered, "Stay in until I make an investigation. If they are close at hand I will come back, and then we can try to get away a little later."

Stanwood cautiously walked to the front of the building, and peered along the wall. From that place two buildings were visible, one of which they had passed on coming in, and the other, probably two hundred feet away to the left but the house next door was not in sight. Going back he rounded the house on its rear side and then noticed the next door building in which a light was visible through an opening.

He returned, and whispered to Winfield, "Come on, and be quiet. We must get over to the vacant house beyond, and I think it can be done without disturbing them."

Winfield slipped out and crouching as low as possible they covered the intervening space. On reaching the supposedly vacant house they were almost paralyzed to hear a movement within. They sank down in the grass, expecting every moment that some one would appear. In another

moment, however, Stanwood said: "I know; our donkeys are in there!"

Their munching could now be plainly heard and it was indeed a welcome sound. To assure themselves that no one was near they approached the door by inches, and, while it was dark within the outlines of animals could be made out and they were now assured that no one was inside.

The moment they stepped inside they were surprised by the sight of three horses, instead of the donkeys, as they had supposed them to be. Winfield drew Stanwood's head over and whispered into his ear, "We must take the horses. That is the only way to beat those fellows."

Stanwood saw the force of that view, and commenced to feel around for the saddles. "Here they are," he said. "I can put them on."

"Get on the bridles; never mind the saddles," said Stanwood. In a few minutes the bridles were found and adjusted, and the horses led out. Fortunately they found they had time to affix the saddles. Two of the horses were mounted, and the other led. "Now, we must go to the north. Beuto went out past that stretch of woods," said Winfield.

As they were passing beyond the last house one of the horses neighed and instantly there was a shout. The three horses were now in the open, and in plain view from the rear side of the occupied building. Four men sprang out and shouted. One was observed running to the building where the boys had been confined and after a hasty in-

vestigation, another shout went up from this man.

The boys were now alarmed. What if they had another relay of horses nearby—that would mean the end of them. “Don’t let us waste a minute now,” said Stanwood. The ends of the straps were applied to the horses and they shot away, constantly heading to the right. “What is the matter with them?” said Winfield.

The horses knew, as the boys soon learned, for they were heading toward the road and the boys laughed with joy on seeing the well beaten track. The horses were now galloping at top speed, and this was continued for nearly an hour. “Get as far away from them as possible,” said Stanwood.

They must have covered fully fifteen miles when they slowed down and the horses were panting. A village appeared in sight, and this now startled them, for they had no idea what kind of reception was reserved for them. Nothing but dogs met them in the walk through the little town, and when beyond it, the horses were again pushed so as to put them as far toward the city as possible.

Along toward morning they stopped at a brook and watered the horses. They sat on the bank for more than a half hour. This was the first time they had an opportunity to congratulate themselves on the success of their exploits. “I wonder what the horses are worth?” asked Winfield.

The question of their disposition had not occurred to Stanwood up to that moment, but he commenced to laugh, as he replied: “We ought

to get a hundred apiece for them, at least. Yes, that's a good way to make money." And both laughed at the idea of the neat exchange they had effected with their captors.

After another ride of two hours, it began to grow lighter and, passing a house which showed some evidences of culture, the boys concluded to stop and inquire the way as well as to learn how far they were from the city. Several men were attending to the cattle, and one of them was able to explain that Aleppo was only ten miles beyond.

They needed nothing more. The horses, after a rest, seemed to be as good as ever, but they were not pushed. An hour and a half thereafter the first signs of the city were discovered, and in another half hour they were marching down the streets of a city that astounded them by its size, for Aleppo has a population of over two hundred thousand.

"We must find a livery stable," said Stanwood, "and, then what?" he asked.

"United States Consul," said Winfield.

The boys were both somewhat used up by the strenuous trip, but after a little search a place was found for stabling the horses, and further inquiry showed that the United States was represented. They were at the Consul's office before he was up, but after a wait they were ushered into the main office and hurriedly explained the situation.

The Consul smiled as the boys told their story. "That was a neat trick, indeed," he remarked.

"I suppose you want a purchaser for your horses?" he asked with a laugh. The boys responded that such an idea had occurred to them.

"Well, we must see them, so we will go and take a look at your stock," he remarked. Reaching the stable, the horses were led out and exhibited. They were found to be remarkable animals, and made a good showing notwithstanding the forty odd miles they had made during the night. The owner of the stable examined their points critically and then turned to Mr. Wilson, the Consul.

"What will you give for them?" asked the Consul.

"Eighty pounds," was the response. The Consul turned to the boys with an inquiring look.

"Yes," said Winfield. "We hate to let them go for that, for they are fine animals, but we'll take it."

The money was paid and they returned to the Consulate. "What bank drew the stolen drafts?" asked the Consul, after they were seated.

"The Oriental Branch Bank of Jerusalem."

"Then they will be presented by the correspondent bank here," he said, as he reached for a telephone. The bank was advised about the theft of the drafts, and after the receiver had been replaced Stanwood told about the inscriptions placed under their names when they endorsed the drafts, at which Mr. Wilson laughed heartily. "That was quite clever, indeed," he said.

About two o'clock that afternoon the bank tele-

phoned to the Consul that the drafts had been presented for payment. With the Consul they rushed to the bank, not two blocks away, and there stood Beuto, who was the most astounded individual in the world. He was delighted beyond measure at their appearance, and told them that one of the bandits had followed him all the way, and was at that moment awaiting him at a rendezvous four blocks away.

The boys received the drafts as well as the passports, which had been taken by Beuto, by way of identification, as the robbers thought. The police were notified, but the man escaped, having, no doubt, become alarmed at the long delay in Beuto's return.

There was a merry time at the Consulate that night, for Mr. Wilson had a house party at which they were guests. During the evening they entertained the people with accounts of their adventures, and when the party broke up that night they had a host of friends who bade them good-by.

Two days thereafter they boarded the train for Constantinople. Three hundred and fifty miles beyond was a town called Konieh, with a population of about 60,000, which was once an important city. It is now the capital of the province of that name. The train on which they were traveling had only one coach reserved for passengers, the other coaches being all occupied by Turkish soldiers going to the Dardanelles.

There was an intensely bitter feeling against the English, and for safety the boys remained in

the coach, thus following the advice of the Consul. At Konieh, however, after waiting on the side track for more than two hours, they were told to leave the coach and they stood around among the thousands of Turks, who were roaming about, with their guns and accoutrements.

Train after train passed, all loaded with soldiers from Bitlis and Erzerum and few of them stopped. At the close of the second day they found a place in one of the coaches, this being accomplished by the shrewd use of a little money. "Sorry I didn't know how to do it sooner," said Winfield, as the train moved out.

After a run of two hundred miles further, at Katula, there was another halt, and the order came to take another coach. This time the boys watched their chance, and when a train was made up they sought the train master. The payment of two dollars secured them a seat in the de luxe coach, where they had to pay four dollars more after the train was under way.

They were four days in reaching Scutari, the city opposite Constantinople, from which it was necessary to cross the Bosphorus, to find themselves in Europe. It was with feelings of thankfulness that they gazed out on the setting sun which threw a lurid light along the water as they passed over on the ferryboat.

They were happy at the knowledge that the worst of their trials were now things of the past. The experience of the past ten days, in the adventure with the bandits, which had netted them four

hundred dollars, was the most gratifying of their exploits.

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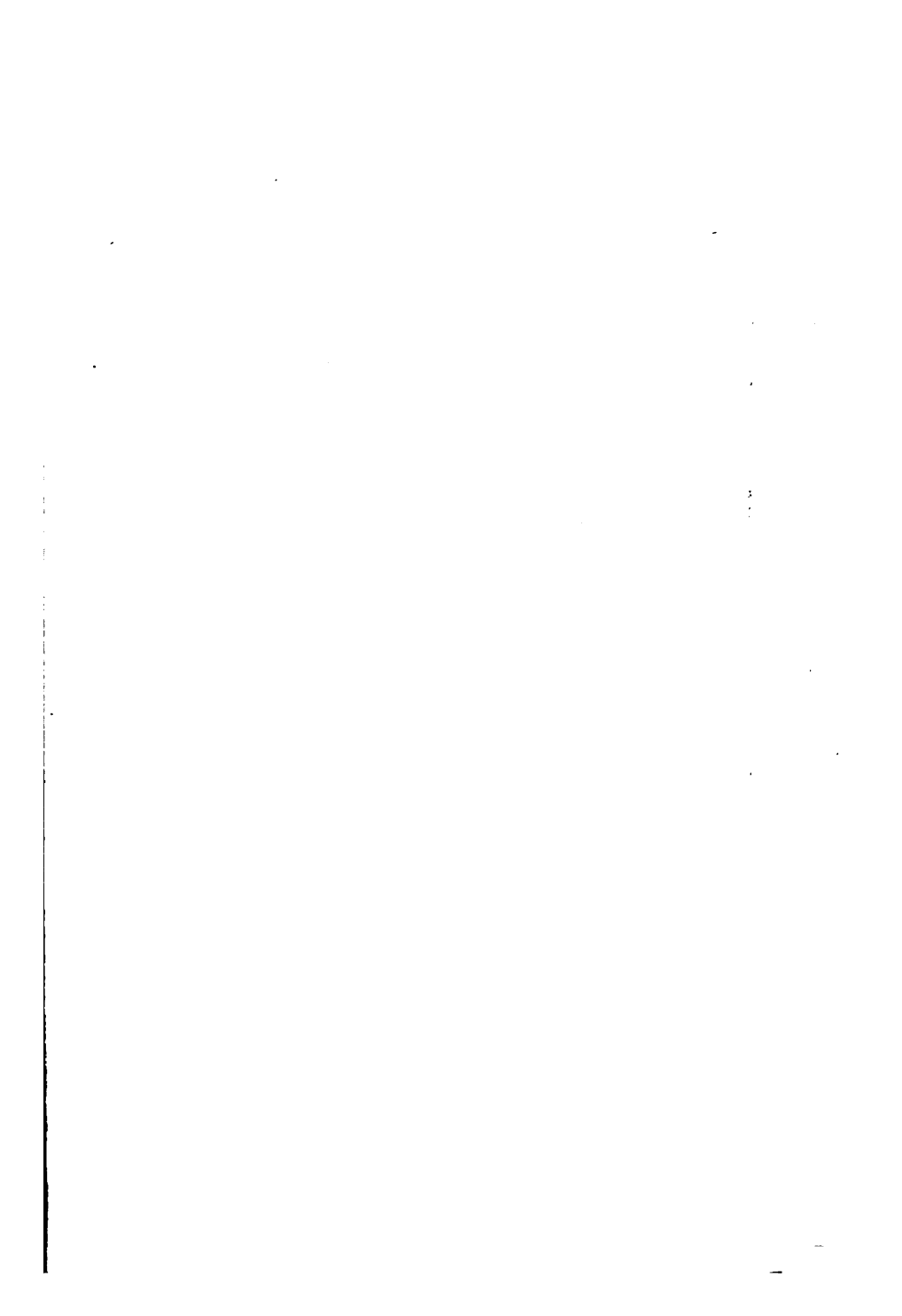
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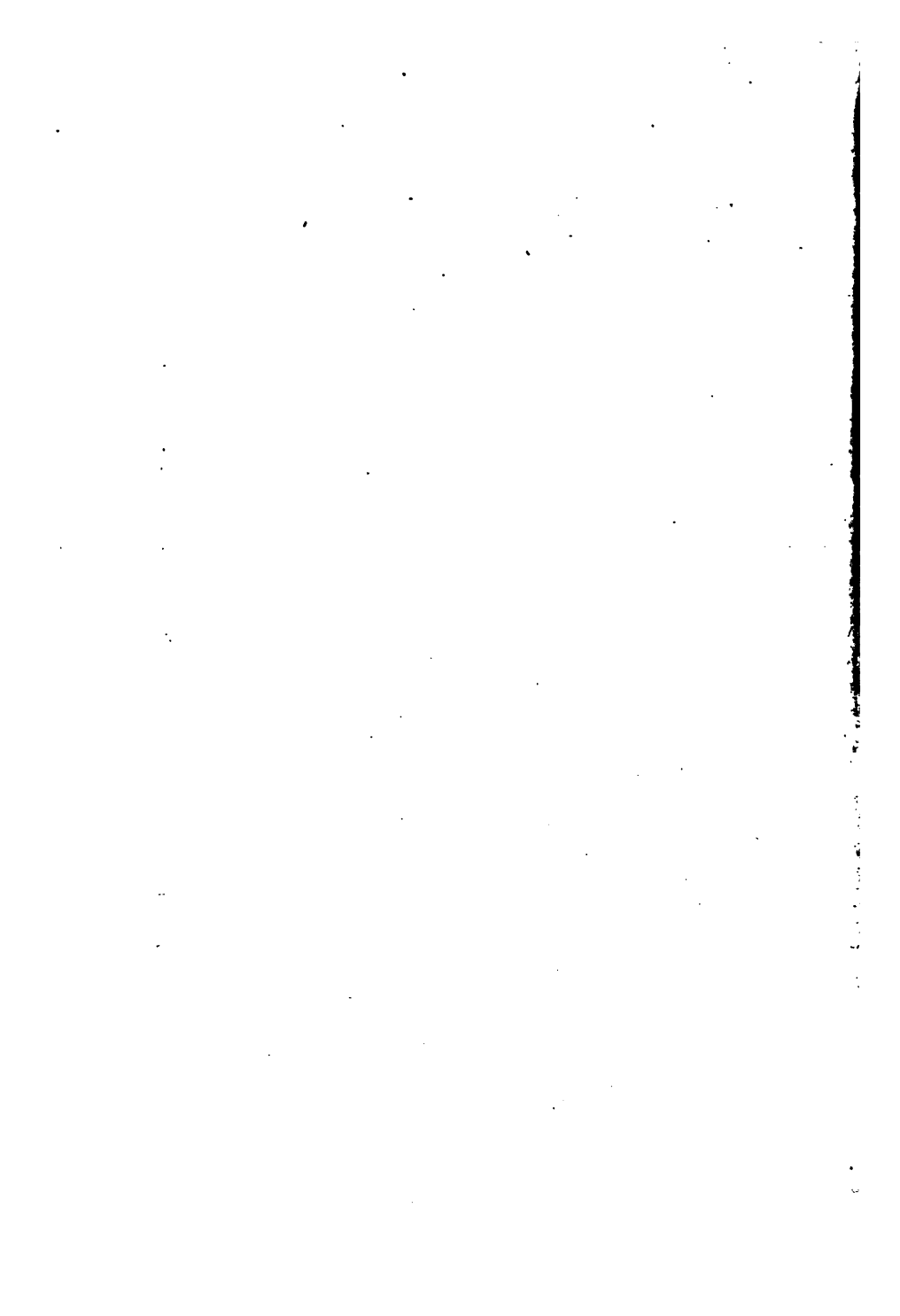
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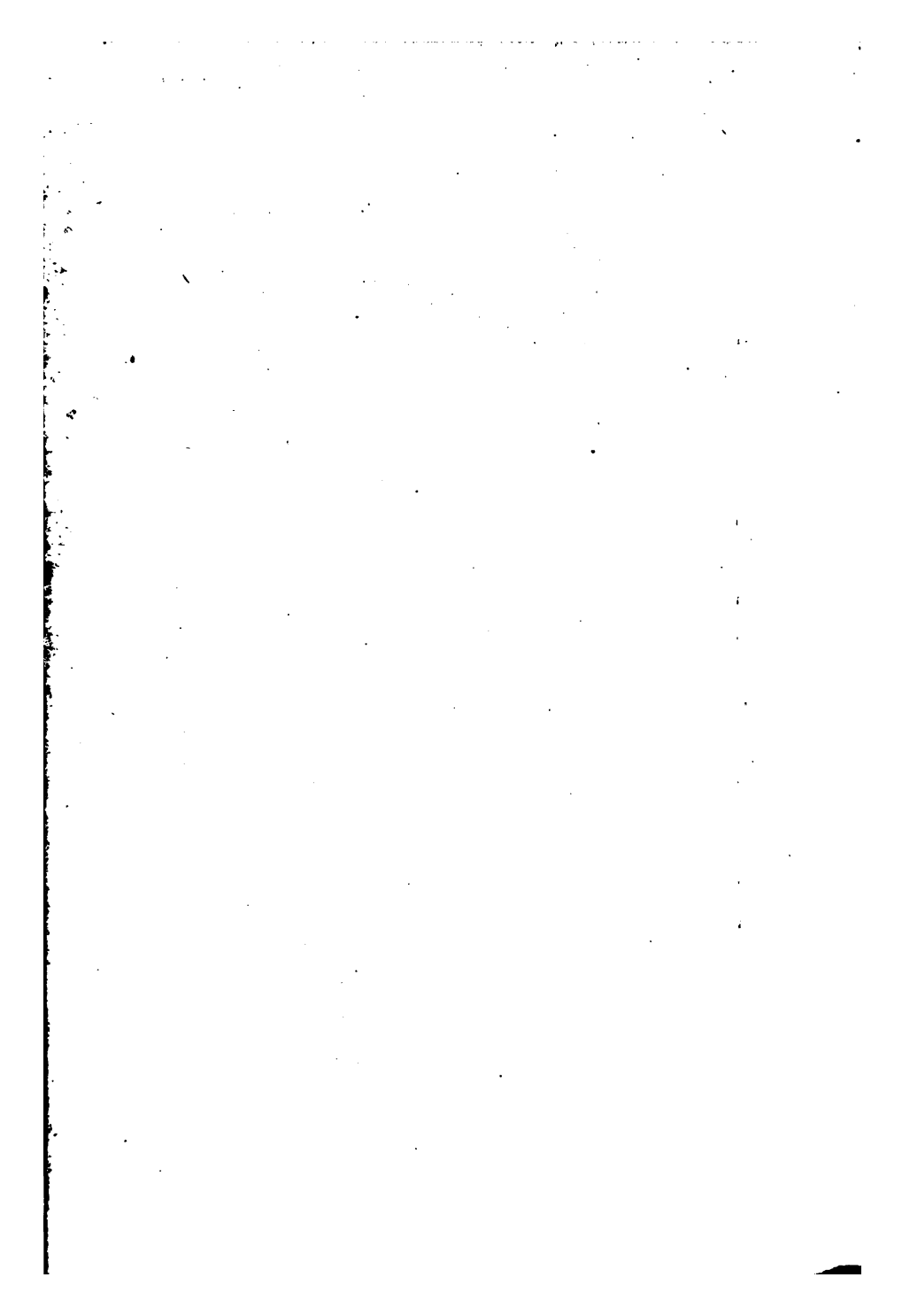
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